

PC & Mac Games • Multimedia • CD-ROM • Online



Electronic Entertainment

THE #1 INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

SEX in Mainstream Games

92 SNEAK
PREVIEWS!
Games & Multimedia
45 POWER
REVIEWS!

An IDG Communications Publication

August 1995

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answer the phone on Sundays.

The other day, we watched a video of the Apollo moon landing with our multimedia encyclopedia. Incredible. My PC actually gave me goosebumps. What kind of people design this stuff?"

REVEAL™
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COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF ELECTROMEDIA FOR VIRTUAL VEGAS

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By Don Steinberg

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Electronic Entertainment[®]

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Tech Shop

78 Make Doom Go Boom!

Your game ain't nothin' without a cranking soundtrack. Three-piece speaker systems equipped with subwoofers have the oomph to make games and multimedia titles sound their impressive best.

80 Windows 95: Fun and Games?

The decade's most eagerly awaited operating system is finally upon us, but what does it mean for gamers and multimedia fans?

82 S.O.S.

PCI for your PC, making a big, balky hard drive understand the 32-bit platform, and figuring out which games go best on which system.

Get on the right bus, page 82.





Fredric Paul

Coming of Age

What does the presence of adult themes and content—let's be frank, sex—in mainstream computer games really mean? Does it mean that the industry is desperate to hook players any way it can? Does it signal an impending moral bankruptcy among game developers? Is it the gateway to Hell for unsuspecting fans of interactive entertainment?

Could be, but I don't think so. As contributing editor Don Steinberg makes evident in his clear-headed look at how nudity and other mature content is easing its way into popular computer games ("Games Grow Up," page 38), players looking for a prurient payoff in these games are likely to be seriously disappointed. While there are plenty of titles devoted to trying to turn on the man holding the mouse (see "Cybersex," August 1994, page 34), by and large that's not the point of games like *Noctropolis*, *Phantasmagoria*, or even *Midnight Stranger*.

Instead, these titles use sexual themes and situations to expand the range of experiences they offer. That's critical if interactive multimedia entertainment wants to be taken seriously. A communications and entertainment medium limited to fantasy role-playing, shooting, and abstract puzzles is doomed to a limited audience.

Games like *In The 1st Degree* (see review on page 56) and *Dog Eat Dog* bring a new level of complexity to interactive entertainment. You may think making it all the way through *Bolo* (see review on page 66) is complicated, but it's literally child's play next to prosecuting a high-profile murder trial or climbing the corporate ladder. And while most of the new breed of games for adults don't yet deliver game play worthy of their subjects, even the attempt should help open the genre to new fans.

Just as appealing, to my taste, are the first whispers of moral ambiguity. Most computer games make it immediately obvious who's the villain and who's the hero. That makes things easier, but real life is rarely so clear-cut. More than offing the bad guys, the really hard part of being a cop or a soldier—or even a wizard or a space marine—is knowing whom to hit and whom to help.

As computer games inch closer to offering a full-range of experiences—from blasting aliens to mastering complex social skills—the ranks of players will grow to rival the mass audiences garnered by movies and television.

Of course, the content will have to move beyond the ubiquitous white-male perspective that currently defines almost all of these games. People who don't fit that demographic can be put off by having to deal with the world in that role. Would it really be so difficult to let you play as a woman or a person of color? With the nation's population evolving so quickly, expanding the potential market isn't political correctness, it's good business.

Just one more thing: Let's make sure that the games stay fun. A faithful interactive recreation of the depressing sides of life might be great art, but I wouldn't want to play.

FP

Tell me what you think! Send e-mail to fpaul@ftw.com; fax me at 415-349-7482, or send snail mail to Editor, Electronic Entertainment, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404.



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character interaction

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Letters

More & More Mac

You guys are really cool. I noticed your magazine before, but I never bought it because it was all PC. Now that you've included Mac software on the CD-ROM you bundle with the magazine, you've earned yourself a devoted fan. High-quality offerings like *Rebel Assault* on the CD really add to the value of your publication. [Ed. note: *The CD-ROM is bundled with all newsstand copies. The subscription rate to get the disc with each issue is \$29.95 per year; call 800-770-E24U.*] I'd still like to see more Mac games reviewed, especially since more publishers are porting PC games to the Mac.

Just a few questions to end my letter: In your April Letters section (page 6), you said that *Doom II* would be available for the Power Mac. Will it also be available for 680x0 machines? Also, could you publish a listing of some of the more interesting mailing lists on the Internet? Your April feature ("get the 'net," page 40) intrigued me, and your address for David Letterman's Top Ten List in May (Sharp Edge, page 12) got me even more enthused. Finally, what sports games, especially baseball and football, are available for the Mac?

Once again, you guys are the greatest. I'm eagerly awaiting the next issue.

Mike Wallinga
mhwall@eworld.com

Thanks for the kudos. Actually, we've always covered Mac entertainment software, and we added it to the CD-ROM disc as soon as we could. The only reason you don't see more Mac reviews in our pages is that most games still come out for the PC first.

To answer your questions: Doom and Doom II will run on any Mac with a 68040 processor or higher. Lion Entertainment is also developing a multiplayer utility that will allow network games of Doom between Macs and PCs. Look for the Mac version of Doom from id Software and Mac Doom II from GT Interactive Software by summer's end. For Internet connections, see CyberHOT!

CyberNOT in Sharp Edge and Donald St. John's new Wirehead column. We're sorry to say that there are no new Mac baseball and football titles being released this year. —Ed.

Pricey Games

Can you tell me why commercial computer games are so expensive? I really hate buying a \$50 game that is boring or not worth the money. I usually get shareware games off the Internet or local BBS. If I like them, I register them. If not, I just delete them.

Joey Jenkins
jxdu001@marist.marist.edu

The higher production values in today's commercial games, coupled with increased promotion and marketing costs, mean that it can cost millions of dollars to release a hot new title. For example, Wing Commander III cost more than \$4 million. Because the gaming market is still relatively limited, each copy must carry a significant portion of that expense. To avoid buying a lemon, your best bet is to read the reviews carefully or look around for popular older games at discount prices.

—Ed.

Doom II vs. Descent

I don't understand why *Doom II* is so popular. I bought it, but I don't think it's that great—there's too much Satanic garbage in it.

Interplay's *Descent* is much more fun. It has an amazing 360-degree environment to fly in, and you get to save the hostages instead of seeing them impaled on a stake. I don't understand why *Descent* doesn't get more credit.

Josh Hallman
Rutherfordton, NC

We think Descent is a great game, too. And we agree that rescuing hostages is a refreshing change from the typical "kill everything that moves" approach of Doom and its ilk. But we like Doom and Doom II a lot as well. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the folks at id Software must have

done something right to spawn an entire genre of first-person shooters. —Ed.

Where's the Max?

Your magazine has the best game reviews and provides all the information I want on hardware and software.

I have a complaint, though. In your May Tech Shop feature "Catch The Wave" (page 82), you reviewed several new wavetable sound cards. You included the Advanced Gravis UltraSound ACE, but you failed to discuss the same company's UltraSound Max.

I am pleased with my UltraSound ACE card but was looking forward to reading a review of the UltraSound Max. Why not include this sound card?

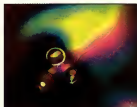
Daric Panet-Raymond
Erin, ON

It is Electronic Entertainment's policy to review the most recent products available from a particular company. The UltraSound ACE is slightly newer than the Max and is an affordable wavetable solution for people who don't want to spend several hundred dollars on a new soundboard.

—Ed.

Whoops

Microsoft Scenes Brain Twister Collection, featured in our May Spotlight section (page 23), is available as a Windows diskette, not as a CD-ROM.



Microsoft Scenes Brain Twister

Got something you want to get off your chest? Do it! Write, fax, or e-mail us at: Letters to the Editor, c/o Electronic Entertainment, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7781; Internet address, e2Letters@iftw.com; and CompuServe: 73361.265.

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SHARP

Duty Now for
The Future

That odd ensemble of genius absurdist known as DEVO is back. But this time they're taking on the world of multimedia with **DEVO Presents Adventures of the Smart Patrol**, a satirical adventure game from Inscape.

Devised by band founders Gerald V. Casale and Mark Mothersbaugh, the scenario is typically DEVOesque, pitting the four young members of the Smart Patrol against evil corporate forces—in this case, the mega-bad-guy Rod Rooter. The hijinks take place in Spudland, which the Patrol must save from an outbreak of Osso Bucco Myelitis (literally, "swollen tailbone"). Only the Turkey Monkey can aid them with a cure. Familiar DEVO characters such as Boogie Boy join the frantic mix of live action and animation.

Casale, DEVO's chief lyricist (responsible for "Whip It," "Uncontrollable Urge," and the like), provided the title's concept and teamed with Mothersbaugh to generate the audio track. The music includes three brand new songs for the Smart Patrol—musicians in their own right—plus five classic DEVO videos. (Inscape; 310-312-5705; not yet priced)

—Donald St. John

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Available: October

Enterprising
Science
Fiction

Leonard Nimoy will bring his Vulcan cool to CD-ROM in **Science Fiction: The Gold Collection Vol. I and II** from Global Interactive. As host of this multimedia literary compilation, Nimoy introduces excerpts from 44 classic and current sci-fi works, including the full text of 23 novels. Contributors include such notables

as H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson, Edgar Allan Poe, and many more. You also get commentary from such

science fiction experts as Jean-Pierre Wolf, Kelly Freas, and Ed Emshwiller. The title will feature art that illustrated the works in a variety of pulp magazines from as early as 1926, and it will also have sound effects, video, music, and narration. (Global Interactive; 310-442-7144; \$49.95 for each volume) —Ann M. Marcus



Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Ship Date: August

Three's No Crowd

Giverny



Let Monet's mellow tones blend with Verlaine's words and Debussy's music.

What could be more relaxing—and enlightening—than gazing at gorgeous works of art, reading evocative poetry, and listening to inspiring classical music? A pair of upcoming titles from New Line Home



Matisse gave his art a sense of whimsy. The poetry of Aragon and the rich music of Prokofiev round out the artistic experience.

Video let you do all three at once—sitting at your computer.

Monet, Verlaine, Debussy—The Impressionist Revolution and Matisse, Aragon, Prokofiev—An Interactive Adventure in Art will combine these complementary art forms on CD-ROM to provide an experience greater than the sum of its parts.

The Impressionist Revolution interweaves the work of painter Claude Monet, poet Paul Verlaine, and composer Claude Debussy, as

well as several of their contemporaries, all instrumental in creating an artistic revolution in France during the late 19th century. The disc will display more than 200 paintings, including 120 of Monet's most famous works; 60 romantic and compelling poems from Verlaine (in English or French); and 74 minutes of music by Debussy. A comprehensive chronology of each artist's life and times; an extensive bibliography complete with photographs, illustrations, and letters; and scholarly voiceovers complete the package.

An Interactive Adventure in Art offers similar material, mixing 150 Matisse paintings and sculptures, 60 Aragon poems (in English only), and an hour of Prokofiev music. (New Line Home Video, 800-294-0022, not yet priced)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: September



Charlie Chaplin comes to life in Questar's **Comedy Classics**.

topic. (Graphix Zone; 714-833-3838; \$39.95-\$49.95)

Questar's **Comedy Classics** for Windows 95 brings yester-

High-tech Hilarity

It's hard to coax a belly laugh from someone sitting in front of a computer screen, but that's not stopping CD-ROM developers from trying.

Graphix Zone, the people behind *4 Interactive* and Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Interactive*, hope that **America's Funniest Home Videos** will become America's Funniest Home CD-ROMs. The company has inked a deal with show producer Vin Di Bona Productions and Capital Cities/ABC Multimedia Group to produce a series of five discs using material originally gathered for the TV show. Graphix Zone will have access to more than 400,000 clips, of which only about 7,000 have been aired. Because the clips average just 12 seconds in length, they're a perfect fit for the random access capabilities of CD-ROM. The company plans to both create an innovative new interface and include a search engine to let you find all the clips relating to a given

day's funniest bits back to life with almost an hour of film clips, photos, screen savers, Windows 95 wallpaper, animated cursors, and sound files. Enjoy *The Marx Brothers*, *Charlie Chaplin*, *Abbott & Costello*, *Buster Keaton*, and *Laurel & Hardy* as they deliver their signature punch lines and slapstick routines—and learn about their lives and careers at the same time. (Questar; 800-544-8422; street price \$25)

—Fredric Paul

America's Funniest Home Videos

Platform: Win CD
Ship Date: Fall

Comedy Classics

Platform:
Win 95 CD
Ship Date:
August



Computing The Numbers

Percentage of U.S. households with a computer **33**

Percentage of U.S. households with family incomes of more than \$100,000 that have a computer **65**

Percentage of U.S. households with family incomes of less than \$20,000 that have a computer **11**

Percentage of U.S. households with a multimedia computer **8**

Percentage of U.S. households that plan to buy a computer by the end of 1995 **10**

Percentage of U.S. households with computers, computer CD-ROMs, and computer and video games **13.2**

Source: *Interactive Electronic Entertainment in the Home*, Infotainment World White Paper, published May 1995. Original source: Jeffries & Company, October 1994.

The Game Show Biz



If you're a game-show junkie, you've no doubt tried the computerized versions of your favorite shows—*Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy*, and the like.

They're fun, but they don't offer the excitement of competing for real prizes against real competitors. Now, thanks to the **Game Show Network**, a



Decades: For now, the next best thing to interactive TV.

24-hour game-show cable channel owned by Sony, the thrill is back.

Six times every weeknight from 7 to 11 p.m.

Eastern Time, you can play *Decades*, a 5-minute contest show sprinkled among reruns of full-length classic game shows like *What's My Line* and *To Tell the Truth*. You get to play along with another contestant-by-phone. The show, hosted by Peter Tomarken, flashes a picture on the screen, and you try to identify the decade it came from by punching the corresponding number on your telephone keypad. The TV screen registers who's right and who's wrong. The player with the most correct answers wins—surprise!—a Sony TV or other valuable prizes.

The Game Show Network recently added another short interactive show, called *Race for the Numbers*, and has plans to roll out several half-hour interactive game shows. (The Game Show Network; 310-280-2222) —Christine Grech

SHARP
EDGE

Bedtime Stories



Reading these stories before bed may just turn sweet dreams into lullaby-filled nightmares.

news
FLASH

Microsoft and NBC are partners. The deal linking the two monoliths calls for NBC to leave America Online and Prodigy and move to the new Microsoft Network, but leaves Microsoft free to court other networks. The agreement also calls for the companies to work together in other digital media, including CD-ROMs and interactive TV. Just don't expect a slew of new products about such popular shows as *Seinfeld*, *Mad About You*, and *Frasier*. Most of the entertainment shows on the Peacock Network are owned by independent producers, but we could see digital products based on the network's own productions, including *NBC Nightly News* and *The Today Show*.

■ **Headcandy**, the psychedelic screen saver with a Brian Eno soundtrack, has moved from Mac to Windows. Unlike the Mac release, you can also play the disc's ethereal soundtrack in an audio CD player. (bn; 415-455-1466; Win/Mac CD, estimated street price: less than \$20)

■ Want to watch remote-controlled fighting machines battle to the death? Then don't miss the second annual **Robot Wars** on August 19 and 20 at San Francisco's Fort Mason Center. Robots weighing in between 2 and 160 pounds will grind, puncture, and thrash their opponents 'til they no longer function. All's fair in love and Robot Wars except explosives, corrosives, flames, pyrotechnics, untethered projectiles, stunguns, Tesla coils, water, or glue. May the best robot win. (Robot Wars; 415-453-6305)

continued on page 12

These days, the letters "PC" have more than one meaning. The acronym brings to mind personal computers for many, but for James Finn Garner and millions of others, it also stands for Politically Correct. **Politically Correct Bedtime Stories: CyberSensitivity for Our Life & Times** brings Garner's best-selling collection of hilariously sanitized fairy-tale classics to life on your PC. The stories are overly gender-neutralized and sensitive to the feelings of the physically, emotionally, geographically, gravitationally, follicu-

larly, diplomatically, and otherwise challenged characters. Snicker at animations, sound, sight gags, a PC phrase generator, a variety of screen savers, printable PC stationary, and even a game to test your PCQ (Politically Correct Quotient). (Macmillan Digital; 800-428-5331; \$24.95)

—Ann M. Marcus

Format: Win CD
Available: November

CyberHOT

Cyber-Americana

CyberNOT

As another Fourth of July explodes in the heat and the lazy, crazy, hazy days of summer hit full swing, it's the perfect time to tour our wonderful country. But instead of piling into the car, fire up the modem and cruise the Internet's World Wide Web in search of inspiring Americana.

ICE CREAM

...and cool. Get double-scooped with jimmies at the Baskin Robbins Home Page at http://www.grfn.org/~adu/Baskin_Robbins.html. Try the maple walnut.

Ian's Ice Cream Server at <http://camelot.lad-lab.alaska.edu/~bimo/> is a great concept, but ol' Ian needs to change the scoop du jour more often than once a month. Even chocolate mousse gets old.

BASEBALL

The Raleigh News & Observer's excellent [nando.net](http://www.nando.net) page includes sterling, up-to-the-minute baseball coverage at <http://www2.nando.net/baseball/bbmain.html>. You even get the ultimate American baseball experience, minor league stats.

Even though the strike's still over, [nando.net's](http://www2.nando.net/baseball/bbstrike.html) strike page is still intact. Wanna get in touch with your rage again? Visit <http://www2.nando.net/baseball/bbstrike.html>.

SALTY SNACKS

For flavorful crispness, check out Bubba's BBQ Potato Chips page at <http://sage.cc.purdue.edu/~bubba/bbqchips.html>. Or, for a resounding crunch, visit the CornNuts page at <http://www.PrimeNet.Com/~lambda/cornnuts.html>.

All are welcome at the Church of Spam. How 'bout a nice slice of Spam 'n' Velveeta paté on a Ritz? <http://www.primenet.com/~swiggyl/>.

CARS

The indispensable American carryall is lionized at the Pickup Truck Home Page at <http://www.rtd.com/~mlevine/pickup.html>.

Remember the Pacer? It's so willide. <http://worldweb.net/~stonej/amac/part3.html>.

AMUSEMENTS

Whereeeeeeeeee! The closest thing to being scared to death on your favorite rollercoaster—without throwing up your cotton candy. http://tmb.extem.ucsd.edu/World_of_Coasters/.

Don't look for elephants, tigers, jugglers, or clowns at the Marshmallow Peanut Circus (<http://www.circus.com>). According to the page makers, you won't even meet camy geeks (people who bite off chicken heads), just computer geeks.

—Compiled by Donald St. John

WITCHHAVEN

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this HALLOWEEN!



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up to 16 and
Head-to-Head
modem play.

IBM CD-ROM

Capstone

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ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE

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SHARP
EDGEnews
FLASH

from page 10

■ Sony may be pushing the PlayStation, but the multifaceted company also has a new **quad-speed CD-ROM** drive kit for the PC. The CSD-760E includes the 4x drive, Navigator installation software, an interface card, and cables. It takes advantage of the AT Attachment Packet Interface (ATAPI) for plug-and-play operation. Later this year, Sony Electronics plans to introduce **quad-speed CD-ROM drives for the Mac**. Also, prices for the company's **recordable CD-ROM drives** should drop from their current \$1,999.95 sticker. (Sony Electronics; 800-352-7669; PC, \$269.95)

■ Finding a place to buy CD-ROMs can be a hassle, but you're in luck if you're cruising L.A.'s Sunset Strip. The first in a planned chain of five outlets, **Digital Revolution** claims to stock the largest selection of CD-ROM titles under one roof. Choose from more than 1,000 titles—double that by Christmas. If you're not sure about a title, you can rent it for \$3.75 a day and apply the rental fees to the purchase. A brainchild of the Maria Brothers (not to be confused with Nintendo's plumbers), Joe and Vito's shop has already welcomed celebrities **AC/DC**, **John Larquette**, **James Woods**, and **Robin Williams** in to do their digital shopping. (Jam 5 Inc.; 310-269-5979; DigRevo@directnet.com)

■ As the commercial version of Microsoft's **Windows 95** makes its long-awaited grand

continued on page 14

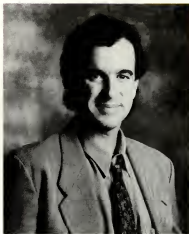


Doonesbury turns 25 this year, and cartoonist **Garry Trudeau** is

celebrating with his first three multimedia products. **Flashbacks: 25 Years of Doonesbury** is a collection of all the strips, with clips from the Doonesbury TV special and the script of the Broadway show. **The Doonesbury Election Game: Campaign '96** uses the familiar Doonesbury characters to make sense of the political process. The **Doonesbury Screen Saver** features ten animated modules. All of Trudeau's profits from the three products will go to his favorite charities: Trees for the Future, The Coalition for the Homeless, Asia Watch, and The Center for Plant Conservation. Fredric Paul, *Electronic Entertainment's* editor-in-chief, met with the reclusive Trudeau at the recent Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles.

Electronic Entertainment: What was your involvement with the Doonesbury multimedia products?

Garry Trudeau: I knew making them would be time-consuming, and frankly, I didn't have the time. When they were finally up and running, that's when I got interested. There is a certain urgency in getting these off the ground, because this fall is the strip's 25th anniversary—and of



course the campaign simulator has to be out in time [for the '96 campaign].

E2: Why do Flashbacks on CD-ROM and not in book form?

GT: With CD-ROM, you can search through the strips by character, punch line, political events and figures, and so on. And the strips appear onscreen with articles that give political context.

E2: What did it feel like to see 25 years of your work on a single disc?

GT: Astounding! That's an entire bookshelf! Actually, I'm amazed by it...but I'll believe it when I see it.

E2: Were you ready for the new technology?

GT: I never saw this coming. I'm just trying to keep up.

E2: Do you use a computer to draw your strips?

GT: I just got a stylus and a drawing pad. But at the moment, I still find it difficult to look at

the screen and draw. It certainly wouldn't save me any time.

E2: But you seem interested in technology. What about that famous series of strips ridiculing the Newton?

GT: I never named the product. I just called it a PDA. It was just bad timing that the Newton came out that week. I didn't mean it to be a product review. Now I hear there's a Doonesbury Easter egg in the latest version [of the Newton].

E2: Doonesbury, and other strips, are available online. Do you think that's the future of cartoons?

GT: I'm a little skeptical that people will spend the time and money to download a strip when they can get it in the newspaper for 25 cents.

E2: Do you spend any time online?

GT: I'm on AOL and CompuServe. But like everyone else, once the novelty wears off, you start to resent the time-killing aspect. It just devours huge parts of the day. Once, I made the mistake of putting my e-mail address at the end of a strip. I had 11,000 e-mails I had to deal with. [And]...there's no room for irony online. That's why people in humor hate it. Jay Leno did it and hated it. It's very cold in cyberspace.

Celebrities should be stalked, harassed and shot.



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paparazzi (păp-ə-răt-'sē) n. 1. freelance photographers who pursue celebrities to take candid photos. 2. see *sleazebags*



paparazzi!

Tales of Tinseltown

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SHARP
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entrance, you may find it's not as intuitive as advertised. Individual Software's **Professor Windows 95 Multimedia**, a CD-ROM-based interactive tutorial, can help you make the transition to Windows 95. It offers separate tracks for beginner/intermediate Windows users and for experienced Windows enthusiasts. The sound, video, graphics, and animation help to illustrate how to use the new operating system's interface, long file names, Plug & Play capabilities, and more. (Individual Software; 800-822-3522; \$29.95)

If you prefer a humorous approach to learning Windows 95, check out **The Improv Presents Windows 95 For The Technically Challenged** from Graphix Zone and The Improv, the nationwide chain of improvisation comedy clubs. Based on the theory that learning goes faster if you're not falling asleep, comedians and comedy writers will add pizzazz to the lesson plans and have you up and funning on Microsoft's newest operating system in no time. (Graphix Zone; 714-833-3838; Win CD, \$39.95)

The Improv will also provide the backdrop for Philips Media Home and Family Entertainment's upcoming CD-ROM title for Windows and CD-i, **The Interactive Improv**. The search is on for writers and performers, and Philips promises the title will deliver a different experience every time you fire it up. (Philips, 800-340-7888; not yet priced)

Girl Talk

Who says girls don't like computer games? Creative Wonders' **Madeline and the Magnificent Puppet Show**, Games For Her Interactive's **McKenzie & Co.**, and

Magnet Interactive Studios' **Chop Suey** are hoping to prove they do—just not necessarily the same testosterone-soaked fighting titles that boys relish.

Creative Wonders hopes to use *Madeline*, the mischievous but lovable French schoolgirl, to attract girls and boys 5 and up to computer entertainment, letting them search the heroine's neighborhood for items needed to put on a fund-raising puppet show. (Creative Wonders; 800-245-4525; \$49.95)

Magnet's hip, visually dazzling *Chop Suey*—for ages 6 and up—features sisters Lily and June Bogg,



Magnet hopes its unique look and style will get girls to nibble on *Chop Suey*.



Creative Wonders is betting on *Madeline*, a strong female lead character.

who are adventurous and full of surprises. National Public Radio contributor David Sedaris narrates the tale. (Magnet; 202-625-1111; not yet priced)

And Games For Her Interactive, a division of American Laser Games, targets teens and pre-teens with McKenzie & Co., an all-video "social adventure" game about high-school life. Girls win by snagging the perfect date for the prom, which some critics say reinforces shallow female stereotypes. But Patricia Flanagan, director of marketing for Games for Her, says, "No one's ever had a problem with games that appeal to male stereotypes." The company also plans to create a special online forum for girls: **Her On-Line**. (Games for Her; 505-880-1718; not yet priced) —Christine Grech

Madeline and the Magnificent Puppet Show
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: August

Chop Suey
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: August

McKenzie & Co.
Platform: Win/Mac CD,
3DO
Ship Date: October

Holy City!

Jerusalem is home to three major religions and will soon be the subject of two CD-ROM titles—both of which will be released in time to celebrate the ancient city's 3,000th anniversary.

Jerusalem: An Interactive Pilgrimage To The Holy City from Simon & Schuster Interactive uses photos, maps, video, and audio to explore the city's rich history. Developed by Tyrell Multimedia Creations, the disc focuses on the city's architectural legacy and provides a game for children. The perspective is decidedly Christian, but Jewish and Muslim historical



See the Old City sights through many different eyes in *Jerusalem: An Interactive Pilgrimage*.

events are also included. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-223-2348; \$39.95).

Pathways Through Jerusalem was developed in the city itself by Superstudio of Jerusalem (a division of Future Vision Multimedia). The title takes a multidimensional approach. You can tour the city with actors portraying King David, Suleiman the Magnificent, a present-day Christian, or any of six other guides. The tours are bolstered by more than 1,000 pages of reference material, an interactive timeline, and morphing maps that depict the city's development. (Future Vision Multimedia; 516-482-0088; \$69.95)

—Fredric Paul

Pathways Through Jerusalem
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: August

Jerusalem: An Interactive Pilgrimage
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: Now

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news
FLASH

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■ **Blade Runner** is finally going interactive. Virgin Interactive Entertainment and The Blade Runner Partnership have signed a deal for an interactive entertainment title based on Ridley Scott's visually audacious film (and, in turn, based on the classic Philip K. Dick novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*). The PC and Mac disc, to be released in fall 1996, will be set in a nightmarish Los Angeles of 2019, where police operatives attempt to terminate intelligent androids that are passing as humans. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; not yet priced)

■ A foundation in honor of slain Tejano music superstar **Selena** has established a World Wide Web site at <http://www.neosoft.com/selena>. The Selena Foundation is developing a museum honoring her musical art form—a melange of Latin American and Texas pop hugely popular in southern border states. It will also establish scholarship and community involvement programs.

■ Compton's NewMedia has shipped the 1996 edition of its popular **Interactive Encyclopedia**. The latest version now includes a direct connection to America Online, and an Internet link is also in the works. In addition to the vast storehouse of text, imagery, and video on the CD-ROM, online access will deliver even more up-to-the-minute information. You'll even get an introduction to surfing the 'Net. (Compton's NewMedia; 800-862-2206; street price \$79.95.)

You Can
Have It All

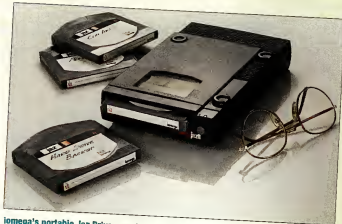
Omega is trying to undermine comedian Steven Wright's flatly intoned joke:

"You can't have everything...where would you put it?"

The company's new **Jaz Drive** is designed to hold up to a gigabyte of data—enough for all your favorite games and multimedia titles. For less than \$500, this two-pound portable drive stores the equivalent of 8 hours of CD-quality audio, 8 minutes of broadcast-quality video, more than 150 high-res color images, or a full-length movie compressed in the MPEG1 format.

Getting to all this data is plenty quick too. With an average seek speed of 12 milliseconds (ms), a 17.5ms average access speed, a data transfer rate of 6.73MB per second, and a 256KB read/write cache, it may not be the fastest hard drive on the block, but it will blow the doors off any CD-ROM drive out there.

Better still, if one gig isn't enough to stash all your stuff, the Jaz Drive can write to special 3.5-inch diskettes for additional storage. The disks are expected to sell for



Omega's portable Jaz Drive can store up to one gigabyte of data on its hard drive, and special diskettes hold a gig of data, too.

less than \$100 each.

The Jaz hooks up easily either to a SCSI connector or your PC's parallel port—depending on which model you choose. Because the drive is capable of operating on virtually any system—Windows, Windows 95, Mac, OS/2, and even high-end workstations, you can easily swap data between work, home, and anywhere else you play.

And if Jaz is a little too rich for your blood, Omega's **Zip Drive** is a smaller, less portable version that stores data directly to 25MB or 100MB Zip disks. You must load special software on each machine to which you'll attach the Zip Drive. Internal and external versions of the Zip Drive are available for less than \$200. (Omega; 800-697-8833; Jaz Drive, \$499; Zip Drive, \$199.95; disks, \$99 each)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform: PC, Mac
Available: September

Digital Olympiad

If you can't wait for the 1996 Olympics to enjoy the action and history of the games, skip the crowds and the commercials and check out **Discovery Channel Multimedia's Olympic Glory** this fall. The Windows CD-ROM will recount 100 years of the Summer Olympic Games from the first modern event in Athens in 1896 through the Barcelona Games of 1992. You'll get statistics, biogra-



Enjoy 100 years of victory and defeat in Discovery Channel Multimedia's Olympic Glory.

phies of medal winners, Olympic highlights, as well as sound and video footage of memorable moments in Olympic history. A Mac version is due early in '96. (Discovery Channel Multimedia; 800-762-2189; \$49.95)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform:
Win CD, Mac CD
Available:
October

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OF STARKLY FANTASTIC
BEAUTY!**



**COMBINE KEEN
OBSERVATION AND
LOGIC TO UNLOCK THE
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**RAGE AGAINST
THE ROBOTS!**



**ROBOTICA: MANKIND'S
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Leader

The best-selling PC, Mac, and CD-ROM entertainment software



Dark Forces—Doom with a *Star Wars* twist—tops both the PC Games and CD-ROM Titles lists.



The 3-D shooter **Descent** drops onto the PC Games chart and lands at No. 5.

PC GAMES

RANK	TITLE	LAST MONTH	MONTHS ON CHART	E ² RATING
1	Dark Forces Clever additions to Doom, a cast of <i>Star Wars</i> characters, and more strategy distinguish LucasArts' 3-D shooter. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, street price \$54.95)	-	1	****
2	Myst Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game near the top of the Leader Board. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD, \$55)	3	13	*****
3	DZone Collector's Edition Play more than 900 new Doom levels, build your own episodes, and customize multiplayer Deathmatches. (WizardWorks; 612-559-5301; DOS CD, \$39.99)	1	2	***
4	SimCity 2000 Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban-simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; DOS/Windows, \$54.95)	4	15	*****
5	Descent Maneuver your ship in all directions as you fight off robots and search for hostages in a series of off-world mines. (Interplay; 800-989-4263; DOS/DOS CD, \$39)	-	1	****
6	Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0 Upgraded graphics and new features keep this hugely popular flight sim soaring high. Release 5.1 is now on store shelves. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, \$49.95)	6	19	*****
7	Doom II This hair-raising sequel has more than 30 levels, seven hellish new creatures, and a double-barreled shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, street price \$40-\$50)	2	6	*****
8	Ultimate Game Collection A six-CD pack featuring Quantum Gate, Spectre VR, Jet Fighter II, Spear of Destiny, SpaceShip Warlock, and Ultima I through VI. (Encore; 800-507-1375; Win CD/DOS CD, \$29.99)	-	1	-
9	The 7th Guest The ghost of Henry Stauf refuses to go into this haunting puzzle. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4807; DOS CD, street price \$70-\$90)	5	19	*****
10	NASCAR Racing Buckle up in a monster stock car and enjoy riveting racing in Payrus's follow-up to IndyCar Racing. (Payrus; 800-836-1829; DOS/DOS CD, street price \$55-\$65)	7	2	***

CD-ROM TITLES

RANK	TITLE	LAST MONTH	MONTHS ON CHART	E ² RATING
1	Dark Forces Clever additions to Doom, a cast of <i>Star Wars</i> characters, and more strategy set LucasArts' 3-D shooter apart. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, street price \$54.95)	-	1	****
2	Myst Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this adventure game near the top of the charts. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, \$55)	1	14	*****
3	DZone Collector's Edition Play more than 900 new Doom levels, build your own episodes, and customize chilling Deathmatches. (WizardWorks; 612-559-5301; DOS CD, \$39.99)	2	2	***
4	Disney's Animated StoryBook: The Lion King Your kids can revisit Simba the lion and friends in an interactive storybook based on the Disney hit. (Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; Win CD, \$30)	5	5	***
5	Doom II The hair-raising sequel to Doom has more than 30 levels, seven new hellish creatures, and a super shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, street price \$40-\$50)	3	6	*****
6	The Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble Five easy-to-use desktop publishing applications bundled on one disc. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, \$80)	7	10	-
7	Turbo Tax Multimedia The approach of April 15 put Intuit's multimedia tax-preparation software on the Board. (Intuit; 800-964-1040; Win CD, street price \$39-\$40)	4	2	-
8	Descent Maneuver your ship in all directions as you encounter robots and search for hostages in a series of off-world mines. (Interplay; 800-989-4263; DOS CD, \$39)	-	1	****
9	Aladdin Activity Center A collection of games, puzzles, and art activities based on Disney's animated film <i>Aladdin</i> . (Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; Win CD/Mac CD, street price \$30)	8	4	***
10	Quicken CD-ROM Deluxe The popular home-finance program is even more popular on CD-ROM. (Intuit; 800-624-9080; Win CD, \$49.95)	6	15	-

MAC GAMES

RANK	TITLE	LAST MONTH	MONTHS ON CHART	E ² RATING
1	Myst Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game at the top of the charts. (Brøderbund; 800-521-6263; Mac CD, \$55)	1	17	*****
2	Wolfenstein-3D An improved version of Apogee, this was id's precursor to Doom, featuring better graphics, more mazes, and deadlier weapons than the PC version. (Interplay; 800-989-4263; Mac, \$39.95)	2	3	***
3	Marathon The first high-quality Doom-like game for the Mac places you on the <i>Marathon</i> , a spaceship that has been invaded by murderous aliens; eliminate them and save your comrades. (Bungie; 312-683-6200; Mac, street price \$39-\$45)	3	3	*****
4	SimCity 2000 Build your own city of the future with this improved version of the classic-urban simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac, \$54.95)	4	17	*****
5	Chessmaster 3000 Play one of the world's oldest strategy games and get advice from grand-master Anatoly Karpov. (Mindscope; 800-234-3088; Mac, \$49.95)	-	9	***

Leader Board is a compilation of the top-selling software in 1,300 retail stores for March 1995. Some titles may appear in more than one category. Source: PC Data.

THE EPIC CONQUEST 900 YEARS IN THE MAKING!



"An adventure that combines detailed fief-management and long-range strategy with lots of bone-crunching, first-person action."

— William R. Trotter, PC Gamer



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Spotlight

SOMETIMES 2+2=4

Packard Bell Has Twins



Packard Bell's Legend 74CDT Supreme's twin CD-ROM drives multiply your entertainment options.

Which would you rather have on your new PC, a pair of double-speed CD-ROM drives or a single quad-speed model?

Packard Bell's new **Twin CD-ROM series of multimedia computers** makes this intriguing question more than academic. This unique configuration stacks two separate dual-speed CD-ROM drives on top of each other, letting Windows users run one multimedia program on one drive while playing another game—or music CD—on the other. It's easy to switch from one title to another without having to quit and swap discs.

Of course, the benefit of twin drives starts to fade when playing DOS games, because you can't run two DOS programs at once anyway. On the other hand, a

quad-speed drive won't deliver its promised benefits with every title, either.

Apart from its innovative drive setup, the new series is pretty typical of Packard Bell machines. Configurations are available from 486/66 to Pentium P100, with at least 8MB of RAM and hard drives ranging from 540MB to 1.2GB. *Electronic Entertainment* tested a **Legend 74CDT Supreme** minitower, with a 75MHz Pentium processor, a 1.2GB hard disk, 16MB of RAM, a full megabyte of video RAM (upgradable to 2MB), and a 14-inch monitor.

Setup was quick and easy, aided by Packard Bell's color-coded connectors and helpful startup poster. We had a bit of trouble attaching the speakers to the monitor—the only task that required tools. Once connected, though, the monitor-mounted speakers are perfectly positioned to work with the SRS 3-D Amphitheater Sound circuitry integrated into the computer. Unfortunately, the speakers themselves lack oomph, and it's hard to see the side-mounted volume and tone controls.

Along with such basics as a 16-bit stereo sound card, the Packard Bell comes with a lot of extras. A 14.4 Kbps fax/modem is standard, with telephone answering capabilities built onto the board. On the software side, you get Packard Bell's own Navigator Windows interface and a hefty bundle of entertainment and home-office CD-ROMs.

Once we got everything going, overall performance was adequate. But despite the impressive list of components, video sequences often seemed choppy and slow on demanding titles.

Unfortunately, current technology does not support putting both discs of a double-disc game—*Under A Killing Moon*, for example—in the drives and having the game switch between them automatically. Until that works, you may find that twin drives are more of a novelty than an innovation. If you'd rather, though, Packard Bell offers the same machine with a single quad-speed CD-ROM drive. (Packard Bell; 800-733-5858; \$2,299-\$2,599, with monitor) —Fredric Paul

Malleable Mike

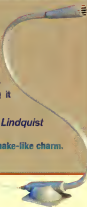
Okay, so maybe it's more cute than practical, but the gooseneck **Free Direction** microphone from MIDI Land still gets the job done. This malleable mike comes with a self-sticking base for attachment to a keyboard or monitor. But you can also wrap it around your coffee cup or hang it around your neck. (MIDI Land; 909-592-1168; \$29.95)

—Christopher Lindquist

Platform: PC/Mac

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

A mike with snake-like charm.



Platform: PC

Rating: ★ ★ ★

High-Speed Creativity

If performance is important to you, you won't want to buy a multimedia upgrade kit that doesn't include a quad-speed CD-ROM drive. Recognizing that fact, Creative Labs has introduced the **Sound Blaster Multimedia Home 4x**, an all-you-need-and-more kit that supplies the ultimate in Sound Blaster-compatible 16-bit sound plus the latest in 600-Kilobit-per-second CD-ROM power.

The easy-to-install kit includes a single manual that covers everything from installing the industry-standard Sound Blaster 16 sound card to plugging in the set of mediocre speakers, as well as how to get the most out of the Mitsumi quad-speed IDE CD-ROM drive. It also explains how to run the installation and configuration software and the other utilities included in the box.

Our installation went hitch-free except for one thing: The CD-



Enjoy quad-speed multimedia the Creative Labs way.

ROM drive failed to operate. What we thought would be a quick call to the tech support line took 30 minutes—wending our way through voice mail to reach a human who could solve our problem. Fortunately, the technician was friendly and competent—a jumper on the card had been incorrectly set at the factory.

Creative Labs supplies an impressive collection of games and multimedia titles, including Microsoft's Cine-

mania '95 and Encarta '95, Origin Systems' Wing Commander II and Strike Commander, and a dozen others.

Priced at almost \$600, the Multimedia Home 4x may not be the cheapest quad-speed kit on the shelf, but you can't go wrong matching quad-speed power with Sound Blaster quality and compatibility. (Creative Labs; 800-998-5227; \$579) —Christopher Lindquist

Platform: PC

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

The Reel Thing

If you're a fly fisher looking for some reel action on one of the many great rivers of the West, Virtual Adventures has just the multimedia title for you.

Fly Fishing: Great Rivers of the West is a colorful guide to fishing some of the most famous trout streams in the world, including Utah's Green River, Montana's Yellowstone River, Oregon's Deschutes River, Wisconsin's Madison River, and Idaho's



Fly Fishing can help you start some fish stories of your own.

trout streams to get you there as well as a review of fly-casting and tackle basics. There's also a creel full of geology, climate, ecosystem, and conservation information, plus a slide show of the spectacular sights these Western streams have to offer. If that's not enough, the disc tops things off with listings of license fees, guides, regu-

lations, tackle shops, and lodges for each river.

There are even a few fish stories. For instance, if you find yourself in the Tuna Flats section of the Green River, keep your eyes peeled for "Gollum the Sea Monster," a 40-inch, 30-pound Rainbow trout famous for wrapping angler's lines around a rock to get away. (Virtual Adventures; 800-437-0005; \$49.95)

—Steve Klett

Fishing the Yellowstone



For trout fishing in America, the West is best.

Henry's Fork River.

Click on a river, and you get instant access to its vital statistics: the species and number of trout, tips on the most effective fly patterns and tackle, and the best times of the year to try your luck. Video clips feature guides intimately familiar with each river who offer technical advice on how to fish various segments of each location.

There are maps and direc-

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Spotlight

BAD BOYS IN BLUE

To Digitally Serve And Protect

Virtual Cop, Digital Entertainment's comic-book-style cyber-mag on CD-ROM, is set in the not-too-distant future, when convicted criminals can get early parole if they'll join a program to reduce police mortality. Controlled by real cops using remote virtual reality, parolees act as stand-ins, making arrests and assuming the risk of getting blown away in the line of duty.

Virtual Cop's interactive story line lets you choose to play "good cop" or "bad cop," decide what weapons and strategies to use, and select which outlaw to pursue. For background on the key characters, the Interviews section gives you a chance to

ask each one various questions. The Artifacts and Blueprints section includes details on the futuristic cops' high-tech equipment.

Unfortunately, even on a Pentium, screen transitions on our prerelease version were quite slow (about 20 seconds on a Pentium P75 with a dual-speed CD-ROM drive), a flaw that the company admits won't improve in the final version.

But despite wooden acting, the combination of live-action video and realistic artwork makes Virtual Cop a pleasure to look at. The techno-pop theme song by Power of 7 is engaging and the plot com-



plex enough to keep you interested. A word of warning: Virtual Cop is full of cussin', fightin', and flashin'. (Digital Entertainment; 800-728-4000; \$24.95)

—Joel Enos

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Scotch on The Rocks

Ever picture yourself as the romantic lead in a swashbuckling epic? Well, now you can take some pointers from MGM Interactive's **Rob Roy: Legend of the Mist**.

This CD-ROM for both Windows and Mac provides a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the film *Rob Roy* (starring Liam Neeson and Jessica Lange) and even fills you in on what becomes of Roy after he walks off into the sunset at the end of the film.

The disc also explores the legendary characters themselves, providing context by offering up tidbits of Scottish historical fact and folklore in the History section. Learn about famous Scots, such as Alexander Graham Bell and the Loch Ness monster. There's even information on the country's



Rob Roy: Legend of the Mist features interviews with the film's actors, including Liam Neeson and Jessica Lange.

biggest export—whisky. But while you get most of the elements necessary to invoke the splendor of the Highlands, the History section is light on visuals. The Clans section, by contrast, is rich in color. Here, you're treated to a display of the plaids, seals, and mottos of

Scotland's great families.

The disc is also replete with the film's complete script; insightful interviews with all the actors; a large body of photographs; and a respectable amount of film, aerial, and behind-the-scenes footage. If you have a Pentium with at least 16MB of RAM, you can watch the clips at near full-screen size. Even then, though, it's hard to recreate the sweeping grandeur you'd enjoy by watching the film on the big screen. On a 486, you'd have to be a real Rob Roy fan to cozy up in your desk chair with some popcorn and watch the tiny video. (MGM Interactive; 310-449-8959; street price \$29.99)

—Bill Meyer

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

AWFUL GREEN THINGS

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Awful Green Things From Outer Space is the wonderfully humorous board game by noted designer Steve Jackson, now in a fun-filled CD-ROM format. Armed with outrageous weapons such as fire extinguishers, electric fences, gas grenades and the ever-popular canister of Zgwortz, you defend yourself against the onslaught of beastsies from the far reaches of the universe.



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Spotlight

MEL BROOKS WOULD LOVE THIS

Spaceball's New Twist



Spacetec's **Spaceball** is simple enough. What it can do for your technique is anything but.

Your left hand grips a rubber Power-Sensor ball while your right hand holds a contoured grip fitted with six fire buttons. Twisting, turning, and pulling on the ball causes the on-screen object—such as your ship in *Descent*—to move correspondingly, while buttons perform common game commands.

Once you get up to speed with the Spaceball, you'll find yourself making moves you never thought possible. Imagine running circles 'round a Doom Imp, while he makes futile attempts to hit you with a fireball.

The Spaceball comes with drivers for nearly a dozen titles, including *Descent*, *Doom*, *Heretic*, and *Dark Forces*. Check with Spacetec for other game drivers.

Like most new equipment, the Spaceball isn't perfect. Adjusting its sensitivity requires fiddling with configuration files. Also, wrist fatigue seems inevitable unless you take frequent breaks and relax your hand.

Still, if you can afford its \$180 price—which should drop in time for the holidays—the Spaceball is a cool tool that really plays. (Spacetec IMC; 800-585-6548; \$179)

—Christopher Lindquist

Platform: PC

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Entertainment Too Light

John Tesh's bland good looks seem to be everywhere these days—on the set of *Entertainment Tonight*, on relationship-improvement infomercials, and serenading us *Live at Red Rocks*. And now he's on CD-ROM. But beware: **Backstage With John Tesh** may be too much Tesh for most people.

The music, aural-wallpaper in the Kenny G tradition, is pleasant, poppy, and utterly unremarkable. The disc's simple, efficient interface offers access to 12 Tesh tunes, 4 videos, printable sheet music for 5 songs, and several downloadable MIDI files. You also get a chance to remix several songs using the four-channel onscreen equipment.

But wait—there's more. You also get Tesh's grade-school class pictures and interactive interviews with Tesh and his wife, actress Connie Sellecca (*Hotel*). There's also a revealing video clip that examines Tesh's preparation for his per-



John Tesh talks about his relationship with musical "soulmate" Yanni.

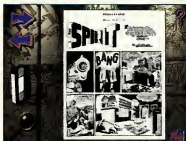
formance at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Tesh managed to turn a simple musical suite into a three-ring circus complete with a full orchestra and gymnasts Nadia Comaneci and Bart Conner. If only the content in *Backstage* were as tasteful as the interface. (Digital Entertainment; 800-728-4000; \$29.95)

—Donald St. John

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Detective Comics



Will Eisner's The Spirit: A black and white icon of a bygone era.

Will Eisner's *The Spirit* was a staple on American newsstands during the thirties and forties—probably a little before your time. But you can catch Eisner's classic drawings, intricate storylines, and political commentary on a new CD-ROM, **Will Eisner's The Spirit**, developed by Byron Priest Multimedia.



For die-hard comic collectors, the disc is no substitute for the 52 pricey back issues. The reproduction is mediocre, and you may need to fine-tune your monitor to be able to read the pages. However, the disc does provide an interesting interview with Will Eisner himself—sometimes credited as the father of the modern graphic short story. Don't expect to do much more than read, though: The disc's interactivity is limited to selecting what issue to view and turning the comic book pages.

Overall, buying *Will Eisner's The Spirit* may be the only way to get your hands on all the issues without spending a fortune, but as a multimedia title, it falls short. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766; \$39.95)

—Joel Enos

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★



Welcome to Sky View. An amusement park looming with mystery, bizarre employees, and challenging midway games and puzzles. You'll encounter state-of-the-art animation, photo-realistic 3-D environments and full screen video performances by over 30 characters. With increasing skill levels and more than 200 outcomes, it's hard to experience this amusement park the same way twice. For a cinematic-quality adventure like no other, Panic in the Park is definitely your ticket.



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Spotlight

NEW MOUSE IN THE HOUSE

Multitalented Mouse

I've got a new favorite pointing device—the **AIRmouse** from Intellipoint. Despite its seemingly misleading name, the AIRmouse isn't wireless, but it's rumored to become so in a future version. Even with its tail, however, it does everything I want a mouse to do...and more.

Configurable, versatile, and accurate, the AIRmouse works as a handheld, thumb-operated trackball, or you can click the buttons to make it roll like a mouse as you hold it in a pen-like grip.

Like my previous favorite mouse, APT's all-terrain Gulliver, you can use



The AIRmouse works as a trackball or as a mouse you hold like a pen.

the AIRmouse anywhere. Run it along your leg, up the wall, or over any convenient surface. Unlike the Gulliver, however, the ergonomically designed AIRmouse fits comfortably in my hand, as both a trackball and a mouse pen.

The AIRmouse comes with special Windows-configuration and cursor-enhancement software. But its dependence on Windows is a critical limitation. In DOS, the AIRmouse becomes just another too-small trackball. (Centauri; 800-784-0193; \$79.95)

—Fredric Paul

Platform: Windows, OS/2

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Smolan pops up to give added insight to *Passage to Vietnam's* breathtaking imagery.

Rick Smolan—known for his *A Day in the Life...* coffee-table photography book series and the book/CD-ROM *From Alice to Ocean*—asked 70 photographers from 14 countries to join him in Vietnam for a seven-day shooting extravaganza in the spring of 1994. The result, *Passage to Vietnam*, is the next best thing to being there.

The lensmen brought along 15 assistants to videotape the work. Such internationally known photographers as Elliot Erwitt, Mary Ellen Mark, and Peter Turnley and popular travel writer Pico Iyer join in to create a total interactive experience.

A small 3-D "quebe" in the lower right

Envisioning Vietnam

corner of the screen provides access to the stunning collection of 400 photographs stashed in different parts of the title. The quebe also marks images to hotlink

to associated material.

Smolan introduces each of the main sections, covering everything from History and War to Youth and Doi Moi, while The Virtual Galleries show additional works with comments—and context—from the photographers.

The only disappointment is that the video appears in a small window, but it is artfully inset into the background. *Passage to Vietnam's* breathtaking imagery and elegant design set a new standard for interactive CD-ROM coffee-table books. (Against All Odds; 800-558-3388; CD-ROM and book \$69.99, CD-ROM alone \$50)

—Joy J. Ma

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Talk, Don't Shoot

Imagine yourself at a cocktail party, chatting with an interesting-looking blowfish and surveying your host's stark but spacious space garden. To attend this party, however, you'll need to log onto **WorldsChat**, a groundbreaking new 3-D chat environment on the Internet's World Wide Web.

WorldsChat, a product of Worlds Inc. (formerly Knowledge Adventure Worlds), is free for the moment. Good thing, too, because you'll find cruising this first-person-perspective environment to be as addictive as Doom, but without the violence. As soon as you reach the Web site (<http://www.kaworlds.com>) and download the Windows software, you can use the Arrow keys or mouse to cruise through hi-res corridors, rooms, and outer-space platforms.

Even better, the other characters are real, represented on-screen by digital actors or avatars. Each of the WorldsChat "guests" can pick a human or other avatar to represent themselves. Experiment with being the opposite gender, or even another species. You converse by typing with any avatar you can see. Performance is snappy, even on a 486 with a slow-speed 9600-bps modem.

The company has plans for a Mac version, and it's developing new higher-tech environments. Once you've experienced WorldsChat in 3-D, you may find that plain, text-based chat no longer makes the grade. (Worlds Inc.; 800-446-3636; free)

—Donald St. John



Pick a digital actor to represent you in WorldsChat's 3-D universe.

Platform: Windows for World Wide Web **Rating:** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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Launch serves up recycled TV and movie coverage, stirs in lots of video ads, and seasons lightly with original material.

The Launch Of Funnelware

How do you put music, movies, games, and animation on a bi-monthly CD-ROM without having the end result cost a fortune?

If you're **Launch**, a new bi-monthly CD-ROM magazine for both Mac and Windows, you pick up material from the *Extra!* TV show and *Premiere* magazine, stuff in lots of video ads, and make a limited amount of original content go a long way.

Re-used items in the debut issue include a video interview with Cindy Crawford on the set of her new movie and studio trailers for both *Batman Forever* and *Cruz*. You also get demos of three games—*Glider*, *Relentless*,



The magazine's strong suit is music, Sweet music.

and *Marathon*—and a collection of animation clips ranging from the half-baked to the completely inane.

Launch hits its stride in the music section, featuring an interview and an exclusive acoustic performance by rocker Matthew Sweet, as well as text stories and clips on Belly, Bettie Serveert, and Terence Trent D'Arby. You can also read a variety of music reviews and check out samples.

It's all packed into an attractive rendered cityscape interface and spiced up with 14 assorted advertisements. Some, like the Dewar's Scotch commercial, are fun and interactive, but most are mere rehashes of what you've already seen on TV. (Launch; 800-955-2862; \$8.99 per issue, \$35.99 for a six-issue subscription) —Fredric Paul

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Boating on the Cyberseas

New hands and salty dogs alike will appreciate the quality and depth of **Hands-On Powerboating** from Hearst New Media & Technology. Based on the *Chapman Piloting/Seamanship* and *Small Boat Handling* guide—the bible of boating and seamanship—this Windows and Mac CD-ROM is more than just a reference work. It presents the how-to's of boating in a multimedia format that's as close to the real thing as you can get without the salt spray. And the customizable simulator lets you practice docking techniques on a variety of vessels without terrorizing a real harbor.

Complicated topics such as navigation electronics and the U.S. Coast Guard Rules of the Road (the aquatic equivalent to a driver's manual) are embellished with graphics, voiceovers, and real-world references, making learning easy and fun. Selective video clips highlight the experience. You even get the full text of the *Chapman Piloting* guide—all 600 pages.

Intuitive pull-down menus make navigating through the program a breeze. You can run through the entire course or skip to selected topics. While it won't guarantee you a Captain's license, *Hands-On Powerboating* could make you a welcome guest on any ship. (Hearst New Media & Technology; 800-685-3322; \$59.95)

—John Sauer

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Buoys will be buoys.

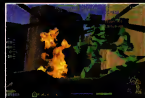


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THE BRADY BUNCH

Pork Chops and Applesauce

If you loved the happily-ever-after world of *The Brady Bunch*, chances are your kids will too. **Bradys Across America** is a CD-ROM geography game for ages 8 and up from Paniagua Productions that features footage from the '70s sitcom.

Players find themselves in a familiar Brady situation—embarking on a family vacation somewhere in the United States.

Each of the six Brady kids faces a problem on each vacation. Players help them resolve the situation by visiting different states along the route and solving quizzes on basic geography, topography, capitals and cities, attractions, and trivia. When they've successfully completed a quiz, players are treated to a related video clip from the original show.



Buckaroo Bobby needs your help in *Bradys Across America*.

Marcia, Cindy, and Greg—along with the rest of the Brady Bunch—make learning geography fun.

Christopher Knight, who played Peter Brady, was instrumental in getting the TV footage for the CD-ROM. Knight, now a 30-something software marketing exec with Visual Software West, secured the rights to the show from Paramount and worked with friends at Paniagua Productions who created the educational game. "I realized that *The Brady Bunch* wasn't going away, and that the show has a wholesomeness that continues to play well today," Knight says. "I knew it could make a good game." (Paniagua Productions; 510-549-8951; \$49.95)

—Christine Grech & Ann M. Marcus

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: September

Brain Teaser

Dr. Brain has really done it this time. In the third installment of Sierra On-Line's Dr. Brain puzzle series, the research genius has accidentally transferred all of his smarts to a lab rat. In *The Lost Mind of Dr. Brain*, kids 12 and up must help the good doctor recov-

er his intelligence by solving ten learning puzzles. Like its predecessors—*The Island of Dr. Brain* and *Castle of Dr. Brain*—the game includes science and math activities, but Sierra has also added word and music scrambles for more variety.

Under the guidance of Rathbone—the now-brilliant lab rat—players can select from nine of the game's animated puzzles. The voice of the wacky rat (provided by Seattle-based comedian Rodney Sherwood) gives the game more personality than the previous Dr. Brain titles, and his various costumes and accents for each puzzle, along with the toe-tapping musical score, bring it all to life.

Dr. Brain's niece Elaine, a brain surgeon, is also on hand to offer hints and record the player's progress. Kids can test their memory skills in the File Sorting

Zone; learn sign language, chemical elements, and Roman numerals in the Pentode game; and unscramble words in Word Surge, the literary equivalent of a Rubik's Cube. Most of the puzzles are brain-enhancing, but some players may find the Neural Maze and Synaptic Cleft nerve-wracking instead.

Kids can play each puzzle at three difficulty levels. The harder the level, the more points they earn, and all three levels begin with simple tasks and gradually become more complex. Once players solve the game's nine puzzles, they get to try the final puzzle.

Finding *The Lost Mind of Dr. Brain* doesn't necessarily mean your kid is a prodigy, but the game should help build any child's verbal, logical, visual, and musical skills. (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707; \$49.95)

—Suzanne Frear



In the Pentode game, players learn the American Sign Language alphabet.

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Rating: ★★☆☆

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YOU'VE BEEN WARNED

Three Strikes And You're Out

The incredible diversity of children's CD-ROM titles means plenty of choices, but it also allows for lots of duds. Beware of **Chugalong Goes to Playland**, **Wild Cards**, and **WonderLand**.

Developed by GemMedia, **Chugalong Goes to Playland** is an early-learning disc for preschoolers that features a train and his best friends, Mikey & Michelle—two creepy-looking, screechy-voiced kids who resemble the saucer-eyed urchins in a 1960s Keane painting. We could forgive these unappealing hosts if the title delivered solid, engaging activities. But the story and matching games suffer from static backgrounds, poor graphics, awkward animations, and long delays when accessing the CD—even on a fast Pentium. (GemMedia; 702-597-5032; \$39.95)

Only slightly less appalling is **Corel's Wild Cards**, a game that lets one kid at a time play seven popular card games against a trio of obnoxious animal opponents. The program lacks important details and seems rushed and poorly thought out. The cards are too small and are not automatically sorted for players, nor can you sort them by suit manually (a real annoyance in *Hearts*, for example). The tedious flying-card animations often obscure who won a particular hand. Worse, the screen momentarily blacks out when you click on a hot spot. To its credit, **Wild Cards** does offer simultaneous text and audio narration along with a "cheat" feature that shows kids 4 to 10 what cards to play. (Corel CD Home; 613-728-8200; \$39.95)

Finally, **WonderLand** resurrects the tired bad-witch/good-fairy storyline to teach sound identification and memory skills to

Wild Cards lets kids play seven games against Spanky and his two whiny friends.

preschool kids. Developed by Ednovations, the title offers flat graphics, rudimentary animations, and stilted narration. Ironically, for a program focused on teaching kids sounds, **WonderLand** features some pretty awful noises, especially the witch's unintelligible cackling. (Mindscape; 415-883-3000; \$39.95)

These three titles strike out, but you don't have to. There are plenty of new edutainment titles you and your kids will enjoy. We'll keep you posted.

—Christine Grech

Chugalong Goes to Playland

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★

Wild Cards

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★

WonderLand

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★



It's a wonder anyone would want to visit **WonderLand**.



Here Comes Spider-Man!

If your kids start telling you tales about how Aunt May got tired of screaming for help and pumpkin-bombed Dr. Octopus, you can guess that they're playing with **Marvel Comics Spider-Man Cartoon Maker**. In this creative program, they call the shots—and anything can happen.

Knowledge Adventure brings everyone's favorite wall-crawler to its Magic Theatre format (see "Make Some Magic," October 1994, page 36). Aspiring cartoonists place familiar characters from the cartoon, such as J. Jonah Jameson (the feisty boss of Spider-Man's alter ego, Peter Parker) or Mary Jane Watson (Spidey's wife) into preset backgrounds. The slick background artwork is a vast improve-



Aspiring cartoonists can create their own **Spider-Man** adventures.

ment over the graphics in *Magic Theatre*.

Once the picture is set, kids can select a new background and create the next scene. When they're done with the episode, they press the Play icon to watch the cartoon move, complete with dialogue and explosions. Kids can save their toons and play them back for friends or add to them later. Young kids new to computers can use the program's tracing feature to get used to working with a mouse.

Cartoon Maker is great fun. The title is for ages 5 and up, but older comics fans will also enjoy the chance to create original Spidey adventures. (Knowledge Adventure; 800-542-4240; street price \$30)

—Joel C. Enos

Platform: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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Sex and Violence

Now that I have your attention, let's get serious. Sex and violence sell. I know that may not be news to you—especially if you picked up this issue because of its rather attractive cover. Still, it's true, and sex and violence have long played a pivotal role in thousands of businesses. As Atila the Hun used to say, "Nice little brothel ya got here. Shame if anything should happen to it."

The question we face, however, is whether sex and violence also have a place in computer entertainment. The obvious answer is "Yes, they do." While it would be nice if they appeared as critical parts of a good story, instead of as gratuitous grabs at our more base nature, the fact is that both sex and violence are playing an integral role in pushing computer gaming into the mainstream. (For more on this topic, see "Games Grow Up," on page 38.)

Why? Because, as the success of R-rated movies and potboiler best-sellers clearly shows, sex and violence are a common interest of consumers—and these consumers are increasingly likely to own a computer. While many people like to spout about how viewing sexual and violent situations is warping our children's frail minds, the fact is that most computer games were not developed for children!

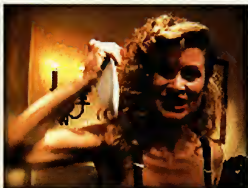
Do you really think the guys at id Software were saying to themselves, "Hey, I bet a lot of 7-year-olds will get off on this splattering bodies

the same adults who read John Grisham novels and watch David Lynch films (although those may not be the same people).

Sure, the arcade- and video-game businesses are different than the computer game business. They target their do-it-yourself dismemberment extravaganzas directly at the hang-out-on-the-corner baggy-pants crowd, so it's no wonder that parents and Congressmen get so fired up about those games. And yes, a self-imposed ratings system is probably a good idea. That way, people, particularly parents, have some idea about what they're getting before they plunk down their money.

But what the naysayers need to understand is that the arcade- and video-game businesses are very different from the computer-game business. For one thing, the majority of PC game players are old enough to vote. They're also old enough to buy whatever material suits their needs and desires—in books, movies, or whatever media.

I mean, just imagine a world so whitewashed that all we could watch on TV is *Barney and Furr House*. Personally, being limited to watching nothing but Bob




Electronic Arts' *Psychic Detective* will leave you in stitches.

Saget or the purple puffball would be more likely to insill homicidal thoughts in my head than any number of *NYPD Blue* episodes.

Sell, those kinds of restrictions are what some people hope to impose on computer games. Instead of treating computerized entertainment like any other communication medium, they want a Walt Disney world of nothing but good, clean-behind-the-Mickey-Mouse-ears fun—all because of the misperception that games are just for kids.

Even some retailers are pulling the "we don't want to sell that kind of stuff" routine—though in a stunning tribute to the hypocrisy of the bottom line, many of them change their tune when it comes to games with big sales potential. While many stores rushed to pull the slow-selling *Night Trap* off the shelves, for example, a lot fewer seemed disturbed by the megaviolence in the megahit *Mortal Kombat*.

My bottom line is this: If game players are old enough to decide who should be the next President, or to rent an R-rated movie, they're old enough to decide on the content of the games they buy. That's part of what being an adult is all about.

Now we just need to convince the non-gaming world of that. 

Some people seem to want a Walt Disney world of nothing but good, clean-behind-the-Mickey-Mouse-ears fun.

stuff" when they created *Doom*? I don't think so. They were thinking about what they—as adults—wanted to play. Now, I'm not going to get into an argument over how you define adult—actual age vs. mental development—but most of the games designed for PCs and Macs were designed for consenting adults,



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Online Headlines

A recent buzz around the Internet was the announcement by eight huge newspaper chains that they're forming a conglomerate to start a national network of online services. We're talking *The Washington Post*, all the Hearst papers, Gannett, Knight-Ridder, and other heavy hitters—something like 150 newspapers' worth. Like everyone else on the planet, they'll be hooking up to the World Wide Web.

This was inevitable: Newspaper readership has been eroding for a quarter-century, labor and paper costs are through the roof, and the surge of information-hungry people onto the Internet is impossible to ignore. But I wonder if this move is as significant as the announcement made it sound. Somehow, I doubt it.

For this new service to matter, the suits at all those newspaper chains will have to change the way they think about information delivery—fast. See, the Internet is great at two things that newspapers aren't: Getting information into people's hands instantaneously and directing data very narrowly to target people's specific interests.

The first is obvious. If you don't think so, try logging onto AP Online on CompuServe (Go AP), for example, and comparing it with your paper the next day. You'll find you've read almost everything in the paper but *Calvin and Hobbes*. (And you probably did read at least one of the duo's comics-page neighbors. You can check on the latest *Dilbert* on America Online at Keyword: Dilbert or the World Wide Web at <http://www.unitedmedia.com/comics/dilbert/>.)

Anyway, the news chains will surmount the immediacy problem simply by going online; it's the second issue that'll plague them to no end. There's no way that any number of newspapers

can ever cover the immense range of interests that pervade the Internet. One beauty of the 'Net is that no matter what you like, no matter how unusual it seems, others out there like it too.

Not convinced? Let's try a test. Into kites? Plenty of people drop into Usenet's reckless newsgroup to talk quad-line tangles and diamonds vs. boxes. How about British singer-songwriter Al Stewart, of *Year Of The Cat* fame? An e-mail to majordomo@bi.fish.com that says "subscribe al-stewart-digest" will find you more Stewart fans than you'd think still existed in 1995. Still not esoteric enough? Let's go back to the Usenet and crank up our pistols in *alt.sport.paint-*

ball—where to play, what camouflage to wear. And these are only the beginning.

No newspaper with a lick of sense would even attempt to deal with this stuff. To be fair, that's not what the news chains are after. They aim to concentrate on local information for each paper, while allowing access to the combined resources of all of them.

That's great, but the Internet is changing what "local" means. In the old days (a year or three ago), it was the high-school football team, summer's swim-lesson schedule, and Christmas displays at the mall.

It's not called "cyberspace" for nothing, though. For me, like millions of others on the 'Net, local is the New Zealander with whom I've been swapping tapes. The Internet is shrinking the world, but that's based on interest, not location. I've been tapping into *The Orlando Sentinel's* well-designed new space on AOL (Keyword: Orlando), where an old classmate writes about the city. But while it's nice to see *how* he's writing, I find I don't care about *what* he's writing. I don't live there; it means nothing to me.

Let's face facts: Newspapers just aren't weird enough for the Internet. They'll do okay, and there may be enough "normal" folks hopping onto the 'Net to make it worthwhile to publish an electronic paper. But these new publications won't find the same world—or rules—to which they've been accustomed. Unless someone in charge figures that out and changes what and how the digital papers deliver, they'll find out the hard way that 'Net users get their information just a little differently.

Tell Wirehead about what you like online. Reach him at dstjohn@iftw.com or e2online@aol.com.



ILLUSTRATION BY GERARD O'NEILL

The Internet is changing the meaning of local news.



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Sex on CD-ROM Adult themes are also finding

Games

There I was, innocently mousing my way through a game of Noctropolis on my Pentium. Noctropolis is one of those interactive CD-ROM battle-against-demonic-allies-who-are-indulging-in-carnage-worthy-only-of-the-end-of-time kind of games.

As usual in this kind of modern adventure, I'm playing the role of a confused guy. I'm wandering around a creepy environment, entering rooms, examining documents, picking up objects, and—WHOAAA, baby! I think I just saw a video of a babe taking down the shoulder straps of her nightgown! Yes, upon replay, it appears that's exactly what it was. Wait, let's watch that one more time. Uh, yes, there's the nightgown, the cleavage, the skin...hey, Noctropolis is fun! Talk about hidden Easter eggs in computer programs! Somebody throw some water over me!

I guess it was inevitable: Full-motion flesh has come to mainstream computer games. Sex, of course, has made its presence known in every communication medium known to man (and I do stress "man"). Ancient civilizations carved and painted rocks in perverse ways. And while we snootily label European nude paintings "pure art" today, you know they served another purpose back then. Back then, paintings were all there was to leer at. Remember, they didn't have Cinemax After Dark in 19th-century Europe.

Legend has it that the quest for nudity is what really sold Super-8 projectors in the 1960s and VCRs after that. It's hard to argue. Some of the best-selling CD-ROM titles, too, have been sexually oriented releases, such as Penthouse Interactive's Virtual Photo Shoot and The Dream Machine from New Machine. But nudity may not be driving the interactive CD-ROM market the way it helped earlier media formats.



Who needs King's Quest?
Sierra On-Line's *Phantasmagoria*
offers more adult adventures.



is not all X-rated.
homes in mainstream titles.

Grow Up

By Don Steinberg

Just Like the Movies

Last year, *Electronic Entertainment* checked out some of the more explicit CD-ROM titles that seemed to sprout like weeds the moment the format was christened (see "Cybersex," August 1994, page 34). Things have, well, evolved since then. Sex isn't being sold just on seedy discs in plain brown wrappers. To various degrees, it's also showing up in mainstream games. Some of the developers are small start-ups looking to make a quick buck with the power of erotica; others are big media companies bringing their adult sensibilities to interactive entertainment. It's coming from both sides—from successful computer-game publishers adding "mature" scenes to their Hollywood-like efforts, to seasoned makers of "adult" videos seeking to leverage their expertise in applying body make-up by cranking out "legitimate" interactive releases.

In many ways, it's no big deal. Hollywood has been putting nudity

and simulated sex in movies for decades. You won't find "adult" videotapes in a Blockbuster Video store, but you'll have no problem finding steamy sex scenes in "R-rated" movies lining the shelves. Heck, even *Forrest Gump* had sex.

"You don't say to someone, 'Hey, I just went to an R-rated movie.' It should be that way with games," says Tom Gotuzzo, president of Rapture Interactive, a small company that hopes nudie casino-games are the secret to multimedia success.

Graphic Interfaces

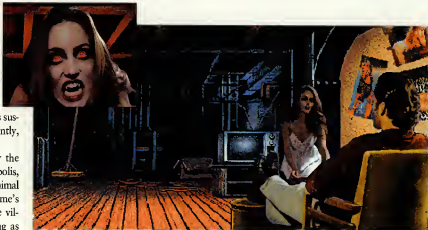
As Hollywood meets Silicon Valley, apparently it *will* soon be that way with games. Sierra On-Line's *Phantasmagoria*, one of this summer's most anticipated game releases because of its technological and narrative depth, contains a scene that the company warns has "a sexually adult nature." The game's creator (and Sierra co-founder),

SEX in Mainstream Games

Roberta Williams, was looking to create a realistic horror drama for mature audiences, and she "chose not to candy-coat the story's suspense and violence"—nor, apparently, its tidbit of adult sexuality.

And while I was surprised by the nudity in Electronic Arts' *Noctropolis*, to be fair, the game has only a minimal amount of it. As Jeff Lee, the game's associate producer, explains, "The villain attacks your psyche by posing as Stiletto in a dream-state and then, uh, being naked and attacking." The flesh-filled nightgown scene that first startled me contains only a split second of actual nudity. "Actually, there's less nudity in there than was originally designed," Lee says. The initial nightgown scene "was filmed...a lot lower," but was cut off before it got too revealing in the final release of the game. "We found we didn't need it," Lee says.

Noctropolis does contain one full-fledged



Looks can kill in this sexy-turned-scary scene from *Noctropolis*.

cleaned-up version of the game without the rating will be out in July. And on top of all the sex, I have never heard the f-word so many times from anything I've ever put into my computer. (For more on *Midnight Stranger's* World Wide Web site, see "Sex on the Wires," page 43, and for a full review of the game, see January 1995, page 92.)

Of course, sexy content doesn't have to be graphic to represent a departure from the typical computer game. EA's upcoming *Psychic Detective*, an adventure game in which you play a psychic solving a murder, has a bit of sexy content, but no nudity; voyeurs will have to be satisfied with a babe in a red brassiere. Likewise, Access Software's upcoming game, tentatively titled *Pandora Device*, will also have its share of scantily-clad actresses to give the game some adult appeal. (For a preview of *Pandora Device*, see July 1995, page 62.)



This is just all part of catching a killer in *Psychic Detective*.

Broderbund's *In The 1st Degree* takes a similar approach. There's no graphic sex or nudity, but plenty of suggestive situations. As a district attorney attempting to get a murder-one conviction, you must work through a case involving a "lurid sexual triangle," according to the game's news reporters. And one witness describes making love with the suspect when you question her. Pretty racy stuff from the folks who're still looking for Carmen Sandiego. (For a full review of *In The 1st Degree*, see page 56.)

The Main Attraction

Of course, there are games where nudity is the focus. Chalk these up primarily to entrepreneurs and adult-video companies hoping to make their mark in the crowded computer-entertainment business. I don't think I'm giving away too much when I reveal that Rapture Interactive's *Cyberstrip Poker* and *Cyberstrip Blackjack* let you compete against full-figured female models in card games; when you win, they perform videotaped striptease acts.

Blackjack and poker games have been computer time-killers forever, Rapture's Gotuzzo acknowledges. But with the prospect of nudity, he says, "it gets more addictive. You're saying, 'I just gotta see this girl naked.'" The game also includes optional excursions down corridors of a 3-D environment, but that probably wouldn't have been enough on its own. "We want people to buy this just as likely



You're man enough to wear one—and play *Midnight Stranger*—right?

topless scene toward the end of the game. "It takes about 15 or 20 hours of game play to get to the topless scene," Lee says. "And the whole thing lasts about five seconds. If that's what someone's playing for, there's not much payoff." (For a full review of *Noctropolis*, see March 1995, page 71.)

Other games seem to take the sex more seriously. Gazelle Technologies' innovative and weird game *Midnight Stranger* employs an interface called "virtual intimacy" that lets you engage various video characters in rambling conversations. If you play your cards—and your responses—just right, certain conversations can lead to one-night stands. These episodes, along with frontal nudity and an "anti-rape" scene (which has been toned down since the game was first released), earn *Midnight Stranger* its self-administered "18+ Adults Only" rating. A

The Good Parts

Title	Company/Phone Number	Format/Price	Mature Content	Ship Date
Cyberstrip Poker, Cyberstrip Blackjack	Rapture Interactive; 310-827-0600	Win/Mac CD, \$69.95 each	Play games of chance against busty women; they disrobe if you win.	Available
In The 1st Degree	Broderbund; 800-521-6263	Win CD, street price \$50	Play the district attorney in this adventure game involving a murderous sex triangle; no graphic images, just situations.	Available
Midnight Stranger	Gazelle Technologies; 800-237-6675	Win CD/Mac CD, \$59.95	An adventure game featuring virtual intimacy: frontal nudity, first-person perspective sex scenes.	Available
Mirage	Atlantis Interactive; 800-822-8339	Win/Mac CD, \$69.99	A Western adventure game featuring a pair of porn stars.	July
The Ms. Metaverse Pageant	Virtual Vegas; 310-315-3606	Win CD/Mac CD, \$49.95	Judge a futuristic pageant. You decide whether it's about beauty, brains, or something else.	August
Noctropolis	Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525	DOS CD, \$49.95	An adventure game that contains some frontal nudity.	Available
Pandora Device	Access Software; 800-800-4800	DOS CD, \$99.95	An adventure game featuring ex-Charlie's Angel Tanya Roberts.	Spring 1996
Phantasmagoria	Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707	Win CD, \$69.95	A horror/adventure game with adult themes, including a sex scene.	Summer
Psychic Detective	Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525	DOS CD/3DO/PlayStation, not yet priced	An adventure game with adult content, including a sexy woman in lingerie.	Fall
Red Shoe Diaries	Magnet Interactive; 202-625-1111	Win CD/Mac CD, not yet priced	A CD-ROM adaption of the Showtime TV show, in which the goal is to live out people's fantasies.	1996
Virtual Vegas, Vol. 1	Virtual Vegas; 310-315-3606	Win CD/Mac CD, \$29.95	Play games of chance with leather-clad dealers who speak in double-entendres.	Available

as they'd buy *Myst* or *Under A Killing Moon*," says Gotuzzo. "So we add another dimension to it—sex appeal." (I think my favorite part of the *Cyberstrip* series is that its "panic button"—the thing you're supposed to click if the boss comes into your office—displays a Macintosh desktop on the screen of my Pentium. If my boss saw that, he would panic.)

Rapture's next game is *Hollywood Body Double*, in which you are hired to direct a pay-per-view special starring Shelley Michelle, a real-life body-double for big-time actresses. "If you do well, Shelley invites you back to her apartment, for a cocktail or something," Gotuzzo explains, not entirely giving away the ending.

A handful of other companies also publish games that combine, in various proportions, skin, games of chance, and the future. *Virtual Vegas Vol. 1*, which includes sexy outfits, plenty of cleavage, and flat double-entendres in a futuristic rendered casino, is probably the best known of the lot. (For some reason,

the future is a major theme in sex-game discs. I guess the promise of a sex-filled future is appealing to those who aren't getting any in



Who's that girl? You be the judge if she qualifies as the winner of *The Ms. Metaverse Pageant*.

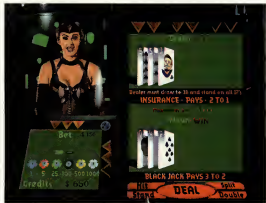
the present.) The company that makes *Virtual Vegas* will soon be coming out with another adult-themed game, *The Ms. Metaverse Pageant*, which is a futuristic beauty pageant in which you are the judge. (For more on participating in *Ms. Metaverse* online, see "Sex on the Wires" on page 43.)

Be warned, though: Many of these "games" are far more "adult" than their playful names would indicate. Big-time video pornographer Vivid Entertainment has issued dozens of its raunch-fest movies on CD-ROM under the name Vivid Interactive, along with a handful of so-called games for CD-ROM (*Hot Slots*, *Winner Takes All*). These games stick a user's superficial bets and wheel-spins between poorly digitized, very raunchy scenes that are apparently lifted straight from Vivid's movies.

Vivid, however, is also publishing non-hardcore CD-ROM games under the Atlantis Interactive label. One of its first game releases is *Mirage*, which spokesman Charlie Bozonier

describes as "like a *Myst* or *The 7th Guest* with a Western cyberpunk format." Okay.

In *Mirage*, "it's the Old West and your wife is kidnapped, and you're helped to find her by a beautiful Indian girl." There are various other beautiful women to encounter in the game, which will combine rendered environments with full-motion video. At one point, for example, you find a telescope at



Play your cards right in *Virtual Vegas*, and the dishy dealer may take a liking to you.

the top of a hill, and you peer through it to spy on "two bad girls who stop at a watering hole and basically cool each other off."

Bozonier suggests *Mirage* will be "more PG-13" than hardcore; we'll see. Vivid had considered making alternative adult versions of its forthcoming *Atlantis* games but decided to keep the two lines distinct. Some of the footage on *Mirage*, however, previously appeared in a western-themed porn video called *Shame*. The same two actresses star in both releases. "There is some crossover there," Bozonier says. "If you'd seen *Shame*, you'd recognize those two ladies." This may make some sense. After all, the quality of acting in a typical computer game isn't so different from the quality of acting in a typical medium-budget porno flick.

Another maker of adult CD-ROMs, Digital Playground, is also getting into the mainstream business with its Dream Theater label. Its first release, *The Misadventures of James Spawn*, is a video-based comedy in which you undertake various quests, many involving sexy women: look for Playboy Playmate Rebecca Ferretti of *Ace Ventura Pet Detective* fame. The game will be available in "PG-" and "R-rated" versions when it ships in September.

Version Control

For game-makers that want to offer something for everybody, releasing alternative versions is an attractive option, especially for mainstream game-publishers whose followings have traditionally included younger game-players.

For example, only the "R-rated" version of Sierra's *Phantasmagoria* contains that scene of a "sexually adult nature." Parents

supposedly can block this (and some violent scenes) by invoking a "password-protected toggle" before the kids take the keyboard—that is, if the parents know how to turn on the computer. (*Phantasmagoria* will carry this toggle instead of an adults-only rating.)

Rob Landeros, chief executive officer and creative director of Trilobyte, says the company originally developed two versions of *The 11th Hour*, its long-awaited sequel to *The 7th Guest*. "We had two working scripts with several

scenes that varied in strength of adult content," he acknowledges. "These were labeled internally as the R version and the PG-13 version." Trilobyte considered separate releases of the two versions, or putting both in the same package with a special toggle, but ultimately chose to omit the adult scenes entirely.

"Most of the movies you see are but one version, the release version, amongst several hundreds of [possible versions]," Landeros explains. "How a creator decides what ultimately to keep is a complex, often collaborative process that goes beyond whether or not to include sex."

Trilobyte is currently working on a humorous game of office politics called *Dog Eat Dog*, which Landeros says contains "no significant nudity" but does deal with adult content, "as befitting an office politics theme." "The terms mature and adult should

not be confused with sex and nudity, although those two elements are part of being an adult," Landeros says.

Maybe so, but cable TV has shown that adults go for sexy stories. Thus, it's no surprise that softcore film director extraordinaire Zalman King has signed with Magnet Interactive Studios—developer of a dozen or so mainstream CD-ROM titles, including *Beyond the Wall*, a title about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—to create an adult-oriented CD-ROM of King's popular *Red Shoe Diaries* cable series. Due in 1996, it will be an interactive version of the erotic Showtime cable-TV series that supposedly appeals to women as well as men. Magnet Interactive chief technical officer and senior creative director Gregory Johnson describes the planned game as not unlike *Myst* or any other adventure game, "except the problems you solve are of a more erotic nature than 'a dragon is trying to kill me.'"

The format of the cable series is that there's this hunky guy (played by *The X-Files*' David Duchovny) who, in each episode, reads passages from provocative diaries that people have sent him. He tries to make their fantasies come true. In the game, you'll be able to help him—and you get to watch. "This shouldn't be lumped in with porno CD-ROMs," Johnson says. "This is a very sensitive treatment of the topic."

Sensitivity is a key issue here, in more ways

than one. While many grown-up gamers and multimedia enthusiasts will enjoy the added sophistication, the changes will no doubt rub some people's sensibilities the wrong way.

No matter how tastefully done, or how many times they are compared

to *Myst*, these adult-themed games are encroaching on a genre that once concentrated almost exclusively on a different kind of fantasy. While games like *Voyeur* and *Night Trap* offered a taste of lingerie modeling that went far beyond Mario and Sonic, today's interactive titles are taking their cues from the movies, not Saturday-morning cartoons.



Mirage's leading ladies also appeared in a western-themed porno flick.

Sex on the Wires

There's plenty of sex
on CD-ROM, but that's
dwarfed by the
"pornucopia" of prurient
material you can
find online.

Sex and nudity online? Can you imagine? Well, of course you can. The modern had barely been developed before people were engaging in text-based sex fantasies over privately maintained bulletin boards. To this day, those types of BBSs are a staple of local online offerings.

However, with the advances in high-speed modems and the rampant growth of the Internet over the past two years, sexually oriented content has come into its own. The ability to easily scan and transmit graphical files has led to an explosion in the amount and quality of explicit pictures available to anyone with an Internet account.

Naturally, don't look for any of this stuff on the big commercial online services, all of which have policies discouraging it. Aside from a demure no-nudity *Playboy* area on CompuServe's EDRIVE Forum, in fact, it's hard to find much of anything on the major services like America Online and Prodigy. (Although it is fairly simple to get to sex-oriented Usenet newsgroups through the services; see below.)

Instead, sex is the province of the far more open Internet, and several familiar publishers have rushed to take advantage. *Playboy* and *Penthouse* both report literally millions of hits on their World Wide Web sites. Each magazine—*Playboy* at <http://www.playboy.com>, *Penthouse* at <http://www.penthousemag.com/home.html>—offers selected images of their Playmates/Pets of the Month alongside some of the

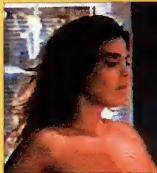
text content from their current issues. *Playboy* even plans a "Girls of the Net" pictorial in an upcoming issue. The big two have recently been joined by the raunchier *Hustler* at <http://hustler.onprod.com>. This site works on a subscription/nonsubscription model; paying for a subscription gets you a much fuller look at that month's pictures and articles.

Naturally, sex on the Web is not limited to the regular of magazine fare. The folks at Virtual Vegas have their Ms. Metaverse Pageant up at <http://virtualvegas.com>. Also, Animatics Multimedia, the developer of *Night Stranger*, has mounted a Web site that lets you play or download extra modules and footage, including points of view for females and homosexuals. Find this at <http://www.globalx.net/midnightstranger>. And Go Digital CD-ROM magazine has additional images of its nude models at <http://www.GoDigital.com>. All that doesn't count the numerous (and frequently temporary) Web pages that are privately mounted, often featuring commonly found celebrity images. Typically, you can locate these by using standard Web search engines such as Lycos or WebCrawler.

But the wildest action on the Internet is in the Usenet newsgroups. Right now, Usenet is like the old Barbary Coast of San Francisco—anything goes. Redheads, Asians, animals, you name it—it's there in the various alt.sex.* or, particularly, alt.binaries.* newsgroups. (The * is a wild card, which represents several possible specific topics.) One especially high-traffic area is alt.binaries.nude.celebrities,

which affords an interesting way to determine who the day's hottest actors and actresses are (*While You Were Sleeping*'s Sandra Bullock and *Lois and Clark*'s Teri Hatcher lead the most-requested actresses list, while recent European tabloid pix of an unadorned Brad Pitt are all the rage on the actors' side). It doesn't even matter if an actor or actress has ever actually appeared nude in a movie or pictorial—fake images created with Photoshop and other digitizing software also abound in the Usenet groups. Ask, and ye generally shall receive.

The sex areas are not the most female-friendly places on the Internet, and it's debatable how friendly they'll be to anyone. The proposed Communications Decency Act filed by Sen. James Exon (D-Nebr.), which would outlaw many current types of sex-oriented transmission, is still alive and well in Congress. Proponents of the legislation claim it's meant to protect children from stumbling on or searching out sex material on the Internet; Internet advocates and civil libertarians are fighting the bill, saying it is poorly written, unconstitutional, and impossible to enforce. Legal action may be rendered less important, however, by a new software utility called Surfwatch that can block sex-related Internet sites. The company offers information on the Surfwatch package at <http://www.surfwatch.com>. Interestingly, Surfwatch got an immediate endorsement from two unexpected quarters—*Playboy* and *Penthouse*. (Surfwatch Software; 415-948-9500; Windows/Mac, \$49.95 plus an optional \$5.95/mo. for continual new-site updates)



Fuzzy or not, this Teri Hatcher image is the most requested picture on Usenet's alt.binaries.nude.celebrities.



There's plenty more of centerfold Christina Fox at Go Digital's World Wide Web site.



Captured movie stills, such as this shot of actress Gabrielle Anwar from *Body Snatchers*, abound on the Internet.

By Donald St. John

Panic in the Park



Skyview amusement park is slated for demolition. Use these hints to keep the bulldozers at bay.

Old theme parks never die, they just get developed. In the new action/adventure game *Panic in the Park*, historical Skyview amusement park is in jeopardy of being the next thrill center to get a mall-sized facelift. Skyview founder Champ has died, leaving his twin daughters—both played by *Playboy* Playmate and former *Baywatch* star Erika Eleniak—feuding over the park's future. Jamie, the good sister, wants to save the park, while Janie, her evil twin, wants to sell it to demolition-minded real estate developers.

Things don't have to end that way, of course. Before his death, Champ signed a deed that gave ownership of the park to its employees. But the deed has been stolen, and it's up to you, the local newspaperman, to find the deed, return it to Jamie, and save the park. Oh, yeah—you have to do all of this by morning, or the park is pavement. So get moving!

Finding the deed won't be easy. You travel through this first-person adventure/puzzle game via a point-and-click interface similar to *Myst*. Simple mouse motions also control each carnival game and puzzle, but winning isn't so simple.

First, you have to get Skyview's tight-lipped employees to open up by

The narrator's cool as a cucumber and will keep you up to date on story developments. Pay attention!



Skyview's one big park!
Stop at the park map to
get your bearings.



You can play Skyview's games for free in the
casino. Remember practice makes perfect.

beating them at their own carny games. The 12 amusement park challenges include such carnival staples as darts, water-gun shooting, and Skee ball. And Skyview's unique booths challenge your dexterity with everything from motorcycles to air cannons.

Limber up those fingers, because the faster you win a game, the more tokens and information you receive. Eventually, your path will lead you to the Oracle, a mystical being who oversees the park and holds valuable clues to the deed's location. Only after solving the Oracle's puzzle can you retrieve the deed and expose the thief.

Panic in the Park features 20 different actors with whom you will have literally hundreds of conversations as you try to unearth clues. Each time you begin, there are nine suspects and multiple hiding places for the deed, which the game's developer Imagination Pilots Entertainment claims gives the game more than 200 possible outcomes.

Don't panic: No tokens are required for our Guided Tour of Skyview's biggest attractions. Look for the game to hit store shelves this month. (WEA Visual Entertainment; 800-693-3253; Win CD, \$59.95)

By Steve Klett

Take everything
bad-girl Janie tells
you with a grain of
salt. Dollar signs
cloud her judgment.



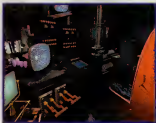
GUIDED TOUR



Play Shufflepuck with this *Gilligan's Island* reject for more clues.



Your grizzled editor wants the story on the park's shutdown, so you'll have to choose between him and Jamie. Likely, you won't have to debate long over that one.



The Oracle's secret chamber holds the key to the deed's locale.



Get Elvis to sing the blues by tilting the board to roll the five balls into the holes worth the most points. High score is 210. Feel lucky, punk?



Elvis is back from the dead and living in Skyview.



This clown's antics belie the fact that he runs one of the tougher games in the park.



Solve the Oracle's puzzle and you're halfway there. Look around his chambers for valuable clues.



How much Evel Knievel do you have in your blood? Jump three out of five cycles across this chasm without planting your face in the train, rolling boulders, or mountainside. Keep the RPMs around 4500, wait for the entire train to pass, and you're home free—well, most of the time.



The magician holds one of the special coins that lead to the deed. You'll need to kick butt in the game booths to get one.

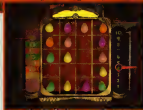




You've got seven shots to knock down five furballs of the same color. Take out the hidden "double" fuzzy and earn twice the tokens. This one's tougher than it looks, so practice, practice, practice.

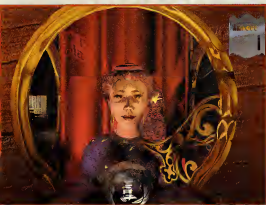


Time to pump yourself up!



Take out your frustrations on the vermin at this booth.

The spelling's not too tough in this one. Just pop the colored balloons to form a letter.



This is the booth you've been saving those magic coins for.

Now's when you find out if you were paying attention. Pick the thief from these mugs and your job is done.

Choose poorly, and it's back to the beginning for you, chump.



Sammy may be a nerd, but he'll help you finger the crook.



You've probably played Skoe ball, so you know what to do here: Get the balls in the high-scoring holes. Straight shots at the holes get you nowhere fast, so try some bank shots at varying speeds.

If you solve the crime and save the park, Jamie offers you a job running Skyview—and a future together. Interested?



Windows 95 Gets Into the Game

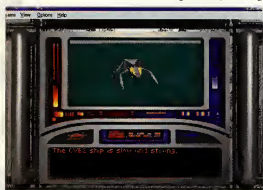
For months, Microsoft has claimed that Windows 95 will be the ideal gaming platform (see "Windows 95: Fun & Games" on page 80). Finally, a growing band of game developers is beginning to put some beef behind the bragging.

Several game makers, including Microsoft Home (surprise!), Accolade, Mindscape, ATI, Spectrum HoloByte, and 7th Level, are already showing off Win 95 offerings. Others, including Origin Systems, have



Warhammer fans will get a Windows 95 fix from Mindscape.

stated their intention to create Win 95 games, or at least to build games compatible with Win 95. Hot new titles are critical to Win 95's acceptance among gamers, since many DOS titles won't run under the operating system—requiring the user to go through the



Microsoft hopes to hit with Fury³.

annoying "dual-boot" procedure to get to good old DOS.

Not every early Windows 95 title will float your boat, but there's no doubt that the new operating system has what it takes to support quality games.

For instance, while Accolade's platform game **Super Bubsy** merely looks to be a mediocre port of standard 16-bit cartridge fare, Microsoft Home's **Fury³** has all the earmarks of a winner. A more flight sim-like take on *Descent*, *Fury³*'s appearance and speed should set the standard for Win 95 games to come. It sure beats *Hover*, the nonviolent first-person action game that ships with the operating system. Look for *Hover* to add guns via a separate upgrade.

Magnet Interactive's Win 95 plans include **Monster Island**, in which you send movie monsters on a spree of destruction. Stomp buildings, make a meal of the locals, and torch some tanks as you attempt to become the baddest monster on the block. Network and modem support, plus the ability to import—and smash—your favorite *SimCities*, should add to the fun when this one ships in the fall.

build its action/strategy football sim. Realistic player movements and authentic coaching styles may make this a gridiron game to keep an eye on when it ships, reportedly within 60 days of the launch of Win 95.

Also by year's end from Mindscape, look for **Warhammer**, a fantasy role-playing game based on The Games Workshop's popular Warhammer universe. Mindscape's Win 95 lineup is rounded out by **CyberSpeed**, a fast-paced action game combining high-speed racing with bone-crushing combat.

Meanwhile, *Star Trek* moves into the future on Win 95 in Spectrum HoloByte's **Star Trek: Generations** due out in early 1996.

The slick **Ice & Fire**, developed by Zombie for GT Interactive with the help of Tetris creators Alexey Pajitnov and Vladimir Pokhikhov, brings adventure, strategy, and Doom-like action to Win 95—and the Macintosh. Look for the two-disc set in September.

Pythonizer promoter 7th Level only recently jumped from multimedia to gaming, but the company already has plans to support Win 95 features in **Battle Beast** and **Arcade America**, which are shipping this fall, and **Return to Krondor**, which is due out by spring of 1996.

Time Warner plans to remake the popular 3DO shooter, **Return Fire**, into a Win 95 title. The semi-strategy action game was fun to play with another person, but grew boring against the computer. Here's hoping for smarter artificial intelligence on the PC.

Look to take a step back in time with **Microsoft Return of Arcade**, which includes such classics as **Pac Man**, **Dig Dug**,



7th Level will hit the Windows 95 funny bone with **Battle Beast**.

Mindscape has jumped feet-first into the Win 95 market with several titles. Look for **NCAA Football** to start the show. While the early version still had a way to go, Mindscape seems to have a solid core on which to

build its action/strategy football sim. Realistic player movements and authentic coaching styles may make this a gridiron game to keep an eye on when it ships, reportedly within 60 days of the launch of Win 95.

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Pole Position and **Galaxian**, redeveloped exclusively for Win 95.

Games for Win 95 will also come from unusual sources. Graphics card maker and Win 95 booster ATI plans to start producing games for the new operating system, including **Spacerox**, a souped-up version of *Asteroids* with a 3-D look and feel.

Action Oriented

The game titles may sound different, but the games themselves are often mere variations on a theme. In this year's batch of upcoming action games, for example, you'll find multiple combat racing and mech discs, plenty of head-to-head fighting games, and all the adventure shooters you'll ever need. Just don't expect many genre busters.

Hit the Road, Jack

There's a lot of combat on the highways this year. The motorcycle madness that kicked into gear with Full Throttle slams into overdrive with **Maximum Roadkill** from Take 2 Interactive for PC, PlayStation, and Saturn.

Other two-wheeled speedsters include GameTek's **CyberBykes**, which offers fast 3-D graphics and 360-degree views and supports VR headsets and eight-player network action. Mindscape's motorcycle combat racer **CyberSpeed** banks on fast 3-D polygon graphics and eight-player network support. Finally, there's the Road Rash-esque **ESPN Extreme Games**, in which you propel mountain bikes, inline skates, skateboards, and street luges on six international courses. For racing with a futuristic twist, check out Psynosis's impressive-looking **Wipeout** for the PC and PlayStation. You race around ten roller-coaster-like tracks in one of eight antigravity racing craft.

Mission-based combat games also take to the road with **Road Warrior**, GameTek's sequel to *Quarantine*. It features Super VGA graphics and an improved driving model. Along the same lines is the eye-pleasing **Twisted Metal** from Sony Imagesoft for the PC and PlayStation, which lets you drive 12 deadly vehicles, from ice cream trucks to police cars.

Mano a Mano

Fighting games for the PC will challenge the console systems with high-tech titles like a strong port of the arcade smash **Primal Rage** from Time Warner Interactive, which will hit the PC, Saturn, PlayStation, and 3DO starting this summer. Also, Mindscape's **Savage Warriors** promises to be a strong contender with a dozen warriors created using the company's 3D Bio Motion technology.

Armed combat continues as well. Time Warner Interactive is porting its mech-like arcade game **T-MEK** to the PC in October. It will support single, modern, or network play as you battle other T-MEKs, 'droids, and bosses to become the supreme T-MEK. Psynosis has 3-D **Krazy Ivan** in the works for the PC and PlayStation. Five impressive battle zones set the stage for frantic shoot-outs with nasty alien mechs. And for hand-to-hand competition featuring wizards and spells instead of robots and rock-

ets, Electronic Arts is shipping **Magic Carpet II** in September. You'll morph into different creatures and command armies of spiders.

Thrills and Kills

Shooters and apocalyptic arcade adventures are also well represented. Check out Origin's action/adventure **Crusader: No Remorse** in the fall. You play a Silencer for the tyrannical World Economic Consortium who betrays the group to join the resistance.

Mindscape has an end-of-the-world action/adventure of its own. In **Warhammer 40,000: Dark Crusaders**, you lead a heavily armed team into various 3-D environments on multiple planets to weed out traitors of the emperor.

Sony Imagesoft's 3-D **Virus** should keep action fans happy on the PC this Christmas and on the PlayStation in early 1996. An unknown virus invades your ship and fuses organic and electronic material into mutants.

Acclaim wants to take you out to the movies with three new multiplatform games based on big-name films. In **Alien Trilogy** you navigate 18 levels of hair-raising battles. **Batman Forever** brings interactive movie fun to the PC, Saturn, and PlayStation. Finally, Hollywood Pictures' **Judge Dredd**, starring Sylvester Stallone, will become a PC game featuring 28 missions and 12 levels—7 from the film and 5 from the original comic book.

TV tie-ins mix the action with a little jiggle. While **Baywatch** babe Pamela Anderson is in Dark Horse Interactive's **Barb Wire**, costar Yasmine Bleeth will play Jo, a tough but adorable mercenary tracking down dictator Drexel (Walter Koenig, *Star Trek's* Chekov) in **Maximum Surge**. Look for Digital Pictures' all-video title this November on the PC, Saturn, and 3DO.

Zombie's **ZPG**—for Zero Population Growth—mixes 3-D characters and arcade action with black-and-white backgrounds animated by MTV artist Aiden Hughes in the retro style of heroic Soviet worker posters. GT Interactive will distribute the game.

Philips continues to develop for the CD-I and PC with **Alien Affly**. After crashing on an unknown planet during a routine survey mission, you must work with a resident alien to rendezvous with your mothership. The Argonaut-developed title won't ship till '96.

Take 2 Interactive's **Maximum Roadkill** is just one of a slew of high-speed motorcycle action games.



The futuristic racing game **Wipeout** from Psynosis should be one of the best titles they release this year.



Virus from Sony Imagesoft offers a twisted plot and lots of explosive action.

Aiming for Adventure

Adventure fans can rejoice in a passel of new adventure/role-playing games on the way for the holidays. And while the traditional party-of-comrades RPG may be going the way of the dodo, there are plenty of alternatives and even a few pleasantly old-fashioned surprises.

BullFrog recently gave a sneak peek at **Dungeon Keeper**, an action-packed underworld adventure that turns the fantasy role-playing genre inside out. Rather than taking on the role of a do-gooder knight out to rid the world of evil while gathering riches, you play a dungeon master with the opposite goal: preventing pesky adventurers from stealing your treasures. Hordes of giant spiders, cockroaches, and other malevolent monsters are at your command, and your combat perspective changes to match whatever creature you send into combat. Switch to the cockroach, for example, and your view changes to ground level. The game

is built around a new 3-D engine with real-time light shading that promises to provide an extremely immersive and bone-chilling experience.

If you'd rather work for the side of good, Virgin Interactive Entertainment's **Lands of Lore II: Guardians of Destiny** will let you play as Luther, the peace-loving son of Scotia—the sorceress of the Dark Army that was destroyed in the original *Lands of Lore*. You must learn how to control your inherited

power to morph into various evil creatures. Only the lands of GladStone hold the ancient magic that will release you from the dark shadow of your heritage. Prefer science fiction to fantasy? LucasArts is prepping **Calia 2095**, a disturbing first-person adventure. After a massive earthquake separates Northern California from the rest of the continent, a multinational cartel develops the landmass into a technically sophisticated island continent called Calia. You play as a veteran bounty hunter out to apprehend the assassin of a prominent senator. Your assignment becomes considerably more complicated, however, as you must protect Calia—and the world—from a nasty Information Boss who rules the Super Information Highway.

Younger audiences and platform-adventure fans should appreciate **Heart of Darkness**, a cinematic and graphical extravaganza in which players assume the role of Andy, a young boy



Things get bloody in *Urban Decay*.

trying to save his dog. Andy must confront bedtime monsters and overcome his fear of the dark by climbing, swimming, and shooting his way through a variety of visually stunning puzzles. The story line may sound like it's aimed at kids, but the puzzles are

reportedly tough enough to challenge anyone.

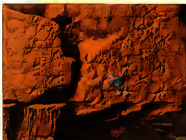
Andrew Spencer, the creator of the 3-D fantasy adventure *Ecstasia*, is busy at work on a slick 3-D title set in the modern world. **Urban Decay** features a larger environment, multiple 3-D perspectives, and a lot of action. Look for it from Psynosis in summer 1996.

Beginning role players may want to check out **Druid: Daemons of the Mind** from Sir-Tech. A simplified interface and outstanding graphics should draw in even the most newbie gamer.

Players interested in ancient history will be glad to hear that Interplay's **Dungeon Master II: The Legend of Skullkeep** will debut this fall—eight years after its enormously popular predecessor, *Dungeon Master*. Take on the role of Torham Zed and win the halls of Skullkeep with the aid of up to three companions whose actions you also control. The new *Dungeon Master* includes a point-and-click interface, 3-D sound, and realistic weather effects such as rain and lightning.

Interplay will also release the cinematic adventure **NetRunner**, a story set in a future where guns have been replaced by advanced artificial intelligence. You navigate this high-tech world as the son of the founder of the cyberspace revolution.

If you'd rather deal with historical technology, go back in time to the hub of World War II Allied military intelligence in **Enigma: Discover the Secrets of Bletchley Park** from Rupert Murdoch's News Multimedia. Bletchley Park Mansion served as the headquarters for Allied signal intelligence during the war. Use the mansion's secrets to crack enemy transmission codes and track German U-boats. Do well enough, and you'll eventually have to decide whether or not to drop the big one on Japan.



Heart of Darkness takes platform adventures to a new level.



California gets its own continent in *Calia 2095*.



Dungeon Master gets a sequel in *The Legend of Skullkeep*.

Flying High and Anchors Aweigh



Take to the skies in an F-22 in *Jetfighter III*.

Personal computer-based flight and naval sims just keep getting better. Even though Spectrum HoloByte's long-anticipated Falcon 4.0 is still only a dot on the horizon, there's no shortage of new sims—all due before the holidays—to keep virtual pilots and captains in motion.

Ocean's **TFX: EF2000** jet fighter simulation, the sequel to TFX: Tactical Fighter Experiment, offers jaw-dropping 3-D graphics and sophisticated polygon mapping. The game puts players in the cockpit of the European EF2000 light tactical fighter, a plane that won't see real-world skies until the year 2000. Players can lead up to four wingmen in an effort to stop the Russians from seizing control of Norway and Sweden. As an added bonus, the game includes network support for as many as eight players. How realistic is it? Well, it's still too early to say, but the flight engine was constructed with data obtained from British Aerospace and the Royal Aeronautical Society.

Mission Studio's **Jetfighter III** (distributed by Interplay) is equally impressive, boasting realistic terrain and a 3-D virtual cockpit. This highly anticipated sequel puts you in charge of a U.N. squadron of the world's top F-22 pilots as you squelch a series of conflicts that take place around the world—including action in Cuba and South America.

Space-sim aficionados should calculate trajectories to reach Bethesda's **The Tenth Planet**. Using the company's new X¹ engine, it supports a variety of realistic new lighting and sound technologies that raise the bar for space combat

simulations. Defend humankind against a mysterious foe from a previously unknown "tenth planet" in our solar system.

If you'd rather lurk beneath the waves instead of soar above the clouds, you can train your 'scope on three new submarine sims. Based on input from an actual American World War II submarine captain, **Silent Hunter** from Strategic Simulations lets you run deep under the South Pacific. Packed with authentic film footage, cinematics, and narration, Silent Hunter fires a few salvos of history lessons as well. If you hanker to play both sides of the Pacific



The Tenth Planet features Bethesda's advanced X¹ engine graphics.

Theater, Interactive Magic's **War Patrol** lets you choose between U.S. and Japanese forces. The game includes a database of 40 authentic ships and aircraft, including the Yamato battleship and U.S. P47 Thunderbolt fighter. War Patrol is being developed by Alliance Interactive, makers of the classic strategic naval sim Harpoon. Time Warner's **Fast Attack**, meanwhile,

puts you in command of a U.S. fast-attack submarine in 70 missions, ranging from combat with surface ships in the Persian Gulf to undersea warfare against ballistic missile subs in the North Atlantic. There's also a fast-action mode so you can start firing torpedoes almost immediately.



TFX: EF2000 picks up where TFX left off.

Game Plans for Sports Fans

The latest trends in sports games are merely the latest trends in computer games: motion capture and 3-D graphics. The result is a generation of sports titles more realistic than ever before.

If you were dazzled by FIFA International Soccer for the PC and 3DO, get ready for more. EA Sports is following up with PC, PlayStation, and Saturn versions of **FIFA Soccer '96**. You'll get more than 300

PC, Mac, and Saturn title **Quarterback Attack With Mike Ditka**. The first-person-perspective, all-video title promises more game play than the company's *Slam City With Scottie Pippen*.

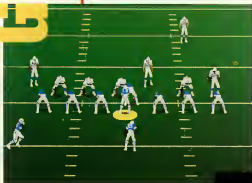
If you're not morally opposed to padding the coffers of overpaid baseball players, check out Acclaim's **Frank Thomas 'Big Hurt' Baseball** for the PC, Saturn, and PlayStation this fall. It uses motion capture and blue-screen film techniques to give Thomas's video image an authentic swing and presence on the field. You'll also find 700 other major leaguers with authentic attributes you can test in Regular Play, Top Of The Ninth—simulating the nail-biting pressure of the ninth inning—and Home

Run Derby. Another hot prospect is Interplay's **VR Baseball '95**, due this fall. The VR Sports line—soon to include VR Basketball and VR Hockey—tops off its motion-capture and 3-D polygon players with "Virtual Fieldvision," which offers a 360-degree view anywhere on the field. Not to be left out of the lineup, Time Warner Interactive is swinging for the fences with **R.B.I. Baseball '96** on the PC.

Rather hit the ice than the ball? Time Warner's **Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA All-Stars** looks hot enough to melt the Zamboni. Due this fall, it features full-season and playoff play, 600 pros from 26 North American teams and six International All-Star squads, and realistic player movement via motion-capture techniques. It will face stiff competition from **NHL '96**, EA Sports' fall release for the 3DO and PC, which updates NHL '95 with new sound effects, player animations, multiple camera angles, and all the NHL teams and players.

For more serious brawling, EA Sports is working on **Foes of Ali**. As boxing great Muhammad Ali, you can "float like a butterfly and sting like a bee" against his ten most legendary opponents. Otherwise, play the other side and punch past Ali's rope-a-dope defense in the "Thrilla in Manila."

For more sedate amusements, look for EA's **PGA Tour Golf '96**, Interplay's **Virtual Pool** featuring "Machine Gun" Lou Butera, Bethesda's **PBA Bowling** for Windows, and **TNN Outdoors Bass Tournament '96** for the PlayStation, Saturn, and PC. Fish six lakes, visit the bait and tackle shop, and scam tips from the locals. Finally, Mindscape's **Chessmaster 5000** for Windows stands to break the mold with exceptional 3-D graphics and tutorials.



Improved artificial intelligence in **Accolade's Unnecessary Roughness '96** should make for more realistic play.

international teams, the voice of announcer John Motson, a playable ball-cam view, and two-player modem support for the PC. FIFA isn't the only game in town, though. Konami's eye-catching arcade-style **Premiere Soccer** for the PlayStation has larger polygonal players and playing surfaces, and Psygnosis scissor-kicks its way into the game with **PowerSports Soccer** for the PlayStation and PC.

For fans of American football, Accolade gets tough with **Unnecessary Roughness '96** for the PC. Improvements in the game's artificial intelligence and player statistics should increase the challenge and ensure more accurate season play. The update will also include a larger arsenal of customizable defensive and offensive plays. Acclaim also takes the field this fall with **NFL Quarterback Club '96** for the PC, PlayStation, and Saturn. The company's proprietary motion-capture technology will provide unique player animations and give extra realism to such moves as the stiff arm and over-the-top dive. The game will also feature 30 NFL teams and all the Quarterback Club members, including Dan Marino, Troy Aikman, and Steve Young. Video sports fans will get to dig in their cleats with Digital Pictures'



Time Warner Interactive did extensive filming of the Great One to replicate his moves in **Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA All-Stars**.



Interplay's **Virtual Pool** features expert advice on the trickiest shots.

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You'll find the lair of the Cavefish if you can snag a pair of their special goggles.

Full Throttle

By Rick Raymo



Miracles never cease. The gaming hype factory finally has a real contender. And guess what? It's original. It's fun. And it's funny. Even better, it's not a Doom clone. As added bonuses, the voice actors actually have talent, and the art will make animation freaks drool on their keyboards.

LucasArts' Full Throttle is a highly enjoyable and bizarre hybrid of an action/adventure game and interactive cartoon chock-full of movie-like cut scenes. Park yourself in front of a good monitor with a great set of speakers and turn down the lights—this one's an experience.

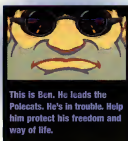
You play as Ben, leader of the Polecats—a motorcycle gang that has more heart and guts than *dinero* and social graces. The game's lengthy animated introduction gives you a look at Malcolm Corley, the doomed founder of Corley Motors (the last maker of steel ponies on Earth) and his smirking yet dangerous vice pres, Adrian Ripburger.

The story that unfolds is a tale of corporate greed, the decline of an aged entrepreneur and his fight for what's right, the mystery surrounding an heiress, and the framing of Ben and his Polecats for a heinous murder. Ripburger wants to convert Corley Motors from making quality hogs to producing yuppie minivans; if he wins, it'll bring an end to the biker's way of life. As Ben, it's your job to stop Ripburger at any cost.

Artistically, this game is a winner. It combines 2-D and 3-D animation to create a dark and dis-

mal future world that brings high-tech mayhem to middle America. The wonderfully detailed characters each have distinct personalities and attitudes. Each of the four warring motorcycle gangs—the Rottwheelers, the Cavefish, the Vultures, and the Polecats—has its own look and feel, from their world views down to their helmets, tattoos, and customized bikes. You'll find more than a dozen 3-D vehicles—stuff like bikes, trucks, and even a massive cargo plane. The backgrounds are rich and vibrant, and what they lack in animation they more than make up for in interesting content. Corley Motors' strange factory, for example, combines old-time industrial architecture with postmodern high-tech touches that reflect Ripburger's influence.

Full Throttle has more than looks, however. Since the dawn of the single-speed CD-ROM drive on home comput-



This is Ben. He leads the Polecats. He's in trouble. Help him protect his freedom and way of life.

Full Throttle
LucasArts Entertainment
800-782-7927

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive
Street Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This animated adventure game deserves all its accolades. It's a wild ride.



- (S) In bike combat areas, try different weapons against each gang to see what works best. • Give Emmet the fake ID to get through the roadblock. • Get some fertilizer. • Knock over the truck to get Nestor and Bolus off your back. • Pop loose the bumps on the corner to lose the Cavefish and keep the ramp. • Use the hoverfan from the car to make the jump over the blown-out bridge. • Set a bunny free in the minefield to get the battery. • Mention a particular nickname to Mo before she pulls you apart.

ers, gamers have been deafened with annoying voiceovers that showcased only bad acting and miserable writing. Digitized voice often seems like little more than an afterthought.

Not here. Ben's gravelly Tom Waits-style voice and clipped, abrupt elocution are supplied with pitch-perfect finesse by Roy Conrad (currently in Martin Scorsese's *Casino*). Mark Hamill (working for a Lucas company for the first time since *Star Wars*) whines so unctuously as Ripburger that you'll really enjoy hating him, and Hamilton Camp delivers a flawless Maine accent as Corley. Kath Soucie's voiceover performance as Maureen Corley is wonderfully tongue in cheek. You'll hear 24 voices in all, and every one is convincing. LucasArts' patented iMuse sound system multitracks the voices with music from a real band (the Gone Jackals) and realistic sound effects.

Best of all, a great game lurks beneath the multimedia glitz. Full Throttle combines two popular game engines: LucasArts' SCUMM (Story Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion), which was used in *Monkey Island* and *Sam and Max Hit the Road*, provides the walkabout-type adventure sequences. The INSANE (Interactive Streaming Animation Engine) behind *Rebel Assault* powers the scrolling motorcycle-combat action sections.

The comfortable and easy-to-use mouse controls make the game fun to play, even for beginners. In adventure segments, a long left-click summons an interface with four options: a fist for grabbing, a boot for kicking, a mouth for talking, and eyes for looking. A right-click calls up your inventory. In the action portions, you choose your weapon (from two-by-four to chainsaw) with a right-click, then attack with multiple left-clicks. It's not all crash and burn, though. You face all kinds of puzzles, from item collection and use to a demolition-derby action sequence in a place called the Smash-a-Torium (in which you must figure out which ramp to jump and which cars to tag).

The substantial intervals between puzzle and action sequences make you feel like you've pressed "play" on your VCR and sat down to watch the show. This isn't a knock—you'll actually like the cartoonlike cinematics that connect the interactive sections. But cut scenes take up disc space, so you'll find less actual game play than many adventure titles offer. There's room for somewhere between 10 and 30 hours of play, depending on your skill level.

It's an easy bet that *Full Throttle* will be a major best-seller. And I wouldn't be surprised to see it appeal to both men and women. The protagonist is male, but the story's competent, talented, fun female characters provide a lot more than scenery.

We can only hope that the sequel (Please? Please?) will be bigger. But hey, no one ever wants to get to the end of a spectacular ride.



You need your solid fuel booster, a ramp, and a hovercar's fan to cross what remains of this bridge.



Meet Malcolme Corley. He's been done in.



Father Torque (the previous Polecat head honcho) offers some sage advice.

That's the sound of the Ben...workin' on the chain....



In the 1st Degree

By Fredric Paul

O.J.? No way! Who needs The Juice when In The 1st Degree lets you play prosecutor in an even more lurid murder trial set in San Francisco's trendy art scene? The game uses clever matte technology that overlays movies on photographs, putting you in the role of district attorney Sterling Granger as you attempt to sort out the facts and unravel a sordid tale of greed, sexual jealousy, and murderous rage.

Your job is to pin a first-degree murder conviction on artist James Tobin for shooting his partner, prominent socialite Zachary Barnes. According to the convoluted plot, Tobin—and possibly Barnes—staged a robbery of Tobin's paintings from the gallery they co-owned, then became embroiled in a failed cover-up. Tobin shot Barnes—he says it was in self-defense—and intentionally wounded himself. If

that's not complicated enough, Barnes was cheating on his wife (who happens to be the Mayor's press officer) with Tobin's young art-student girlfriend.

To make your case, you can paw through court documents and view tapes of interviews with the principals. Then you get your chance to interview them. Be careful, though: How you handle these video interviews helps determine what they say when you get them on the stand. Once you get to trial, you must carefully coax the witnesses to tell their stories. Tobin will walk if you mishandle a witness or omit key points. In fact, there are hundreds of paths through the game, leading to several possible outcomes. If you want a status report—or even if you don't—the KTVU news team shows up to critique

Real-life KTVU anchor Laura Zimmerman lends an unmistakable air of realism.



The defendant's girlfriend is a key witness. Hey, the gun's important, too.



Yvonne, the victim's wife, worked as the Mayor's press officer. She knows how to handle herself.

your work after each day of testimony. The clear and intuitive interface lets you choose a line of questioning and react to the answers you get. Unfortunately, you're limited to two or three choices, and sometimes the options you really want aren't available when you want them. Best of all, by setting the video of the people into photographic backgrounds, Broderbund has made a little movement go a long way toward making the whole screen come alive. With a double-speed CD-ROM drive, movement on our pre-release version was often choppy, and the lips didn't quite sync. With a quad-speed unit, though, the video ran smooth as butter, making the whole process seem remarkably real. (On any drive, however, the terrible, computer-generated music

sometimes drowns out important conversations.)

The TV news team and the company of local San Francisco actors also helps suspend disbelief. The anchors' stentorian tones and "lurid sexual triangle" dialogue will be instantly familiar to TV watchers. The rest of the ensemble is also convincing—especially by computer-game standards.

Although the producers got legal advice from a real S.F. assistant district attorney, TV-watching experts tutored on the O.J. maneuverings may find the courtroom scenes a trifle simplistic and occasionally inaccurate.

No matter. In The 1st Degree's smart use of technology, slick cinematography, adult themes, and complex, morally ambiguous script make it a standout. It should have special appeal to adventure gamers and simulation fans, as well as to women and many people not attracted to typical computer games.

- Can you say "quad-speed"?
- Be tough on Simon.
- Try to gain Ruby's trust.
- Treat Yvonne carefully; she's pretty tough.
- Watch out: Tobin can be mighty smooth in the witness box.
- Save your game often, so you can try out different approaches without starting over.

In the 1st Degree

Broderbund Software
800-521-6263

Developer: Adair and Armstrong
and Broderbund Studios
Platform: Win CD
Requires: 486/25, 4MB RAM,
Super VGA, double speed CD-ROM drive,
sound card, Windows 3.1, DOS 5.0
List Price: \$50

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Clever video, decent acting, and a grown-up story make this an intriguing courtroom puzzler. But replay value is limited.

16 ANGELS ZERO 74

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★★★★/★★★★

PC Gamer:
91% Rating

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Johnny Mnemonic

By Steve Klett

Check out Johnny's alter ego in *Virtua-Ville*, the realm of virtual reality.



Based on a short story by cyberpunk guru William Gibson, Sony Imagesoft's all-video Johnny Mnemonic features a futuristic plot line built to satisfy any wire-jacking aficionado. However, much like its namesake movie starring Keanu Reeves, the game can't quite live up to the hype.

The two-disc action/adventure features 120 minutes of full-motion, full-screen video brought to life by a slew of actors that will have you asking, "Now, where do I know him from?" Cast members include former Los Angeles Lakers forward Kurt Rambis, still wearing his trademark horn-rims; Doug Llewelyn from *The People's Court*; and 1993 Penthouse Pet of the Year and B-movie starlet Julie Strain. Christopher Russel Gartin from Fox's *M.A.N.T.I.S.* series plays Johnny, and trust me, you'll never miss Keanu.

Living a tough life in the near future, where corporations rule the world and a seemingly incurable plague runs rampant, Johnny earns extra cash as a mnemonic courier, a new-tech delivery boy who carries data wired into his brain.

This time, though, Johnny's trying a little too hard. His 160-gigabyte neural implant has been crammed with 320 gigabytes of data. Either he finds the code to get the data out of his head within 12 hours, or "neural seepage" will kill him. Even worse, it seems the data was stolen, and its owners want it back. The Yakuza (the Japanese mob) has been retained to retrieve it—and terminate Johnny in the process.

With the help of an artificially enhanced female bodyguard named Jane, you must direct Johnny to evade or take out the Yakuza henchmen and find the items needed to flush Johnny's brain.

In terms of game play, think of Johnny Mnemonic as *Dragon's Lair* on steroids. As the game progresses, the video occasionally drops to "letterbox" size, indicating that it's time for you to get involved. There are no separate controls; instead, you'll need to learn a few keystrokes—right, left, forward, and the like. You win fight sequences by tapping the proper button at the right time. To pick up or search for an item, make Johnny look in that direction and then hit the "use" key.

If all this key pushing sounds pretty ho-hum, it is. Unlike *Dragon's Lair*, however, Johnny lives in a world of live-action video, not animation. And it's randomized: The item you find in a desk in one game may not be there the next time you play. You also get to play as Jane's character for a few rounds of fisticuffs.

Johnny boasts perhaps the best interface of any full-motion-video computer game to date, but it stumbles over a few technical hurdles. Even on a 75MHz Pentium with 8MB of RAM and a double-speed CD-ROM drive, game play can be agonizingly jerky, especially during fight scenes. Slowdowns aside, the fight scenes quickly become monotonous; you almost always fight the same opponent in the same place, and repeatedly tapping the "kick" key is often enough to ensure victory.

Even worse, the slowdowns also make it easy to jump a few steps ahead of the computer, causing Johnny and Jane to perform unintended actions. You can opt to run the game in a smaller, faster window, but many scenes are so dark that anything less than full screen becomes virtually unplayable. To add to the confusion, several character voices are hard to understand and are terribly out of synch with the video.

While Johnny Mnemonic breaks new ground for video-only games, it also shows the genre has a ways to go. Still, if you like a good story, don't mind limited game play, and have the patience to work through the same scenes over and over, you may want to help Johnny remove that deadly data.



Recognize this guy from *The People's Court*?



Not bad for a Tet interface.



Yup, that's a train coming.

Johnny Mnemonic

Sony Imagesoft
800-922-7669

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Requires: 486DX2/66, 8MB RAM,
Windows 3.1, Super VGA, double-speed
CD-ROM drive
Street Price: \$50-60

GAME PLAY:	★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

If Johnny's game play was as advanced as its storyline, it could have been a contender.

- Save each time the plot progresses. If you can't get past a certain thug, save just before you fight, and when you load the game he'll be gone—at least until the next scene. • If you're having trouble getting the video to run, make sure your display is set to 64,000 colors. • Every time you find an item, jot down its name and location on a piece of paper. There's no "Inventory" command, so this is the only way you'll know what you have on hand. • When the Ghost in the Machine gives you a clue, pause immediately to take a good, long look at it.

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Star Trek: The Next Generation "A Final Unity"

By Steve Klett



Here lies the cure for what ails the Garidians.



You'll knock heads with Captain Penetra more than once.

After a six-month delay, Spectrum HoloByte's adventure game *Star Trek: The Next Generation "A Final Unity"* has finally materialized on the PC. It was worth the wait.

In fact, *A Final Unity*'s well-written storyline may make you forget you're not watching it on TV. The animated game effortlessly captures the *Star Trek* essence in the opening scene and title sequence—taken directly from the TV series—and carries it through to the game's mind-numbing climax.

Spectrum HoloByte has gone to great lengths to make the game look, feel, and play like a classic *Star Trek* movie. It features realistic three-dimensional renderings of all the main characters and more than an hour of dialogue by each of the seven original *Next Generation* actors, from Patrick Stewart to Brent Spiner. Trekkers can wallow in a mother lode of technobabble about the infamous time-space continuum, containment fields, and chromatom particle irradiation. Breathhtaking cinematic cut scenes and the sound track from the TV show are the icing on the cake.



Better find the reptile that was in this cage.

As with most *Star Trek* movies, the plot of *A Final Unity* starts small, then snowballs. The *Enterprise* rescues a ship from the talons of a Garidian Warbird near the neutral zone. According to the crew, only the retrieval of a scroll from a messianic figure called the Lawgiver can prevent civil war on planet Garid. So the *Enterprise*—under your control, of course—embarks on what appears to be a simple quest to recover the scroll. But before the crew can find it, you must save a research

station on the brink of explosion, find a missing Federation doctor, and liberate a planet under siege by an energy-consuming reptile.

Things really get complicated when the Romulans invade the neutral zone with a fleet of new Warbirds that are built for speed rather than combat. The Vulcan-like troublemakers have learned of an ancient superweapon called the unity device, which can vanquish foes at the press of a button. You had better claim it before the Romulans do. Fortunately, the *Enterprise*'s formidable resources—including the transporter, engineering, and holodeck—are at your beck and call.

You must also assemble the proper away teams to solve puzzles on each of the seven worlds you'll encounter. Every character has a vital role to play: If you expect a fight, for example, bring Worf along, but rely on Data and Geordi for help with technical troubles.

An intuitive point-and-click interface makes controlling the ship a breeze—most of the time. Simply click on the turbolift to visit engineering, or click on the computer to see the captain's log or mission parameters.

In combat, however, this system falls flat. To fight, you select a command such as an attack maneuver from a vast list of choices, then click on an engage/disengage button. This can be kludgy when you're under fire. If it's more than you want to handle, you can delegate tactical and engineering controls to Worf and Geordi.

Game play can also get tedious. For example, the planet Morraissia scenario requires the away team to visit the same locations multiple times, endlessly walking back and forth.

Don't let these minor drawbacks deter you, though.

A Final Unity is a well-crafted extension of the *Star Trek* franchise. It delivers the play that gamers want with an attention to detail that won't disappoint even the most fanatical Trekkers. Set course and engage!

• If you're getting your butt kicked in battle, try reconfiguring your weapon arrays. A maximum spread of ten photon torpedoes can be extremely effective.
• Choices you make early on can influence the final outcome of the game. Pay attention to every bit of dialogue and each little detail.
• To uncover vital clues, you must sometimes ask every question possible, no matter how obvious it seems.
• If the GateKeeper's got you stumped, answer his four questions as humbly as possible.
• Tired of characters slowly meandering across the screen? Hold down the Shift key to make them pick up the pace.

Star Trek: The Next Generation "A Final Unity"

Spectrum HoloByte
800-695-4263

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486DX2/33, 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Super VGA, mouse
Street Price: \$60

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

A Final Unity is pure *Star Trek* from beginning to end.

The Bizarre Adventures of Woodruff and the Schnibble

By Donald St. John

Just imagine: You wake up. Your head is *killing* you. The house is a wreck. You have no idea where you are. You have no idea *who* you are. Worst of all, one word keeps flashing through your brain: "Schnibble."

Well, that's exactly what poor Woodruff faces at the outset of Sierra On-Line's new animated Windows CD-ROM: *The Bizarre Adventures of Woodruff and the Schnibble*. With a title only a Monty Python fan could love, it's fortunate that this extraordinarily challenging game is leavened with plenty of Pythonesque humor and cutting satire.

You play as the hapless Woodruff, who emerges from the disheveled home of the kidnapped Professor Azimuth dressed like a skate-punk and as clueless as...well, a skate-punk. He discovers a dark, foreboding city populated by a motley assortment of humans and a coterie of enslaved Boozooks.

Woodruff must do some traveling, pick up dozens of items, and figure out who he is and what he has to do, which includes learning about this Schnibble business. He might even fall in love and get to be President along the way—who knows?

This unusual environment and bizarre situation help make winning the game a stiff challenge;

many of the required actions would make no sense in real life, such as sticking his hand

into a bungee-jumping waiter's pocket.

The rigorous sequencing also adds to the difficulty. You often must perform various actions in a precise order; blow it, and you're stuck fast. Similarly, you need to acquire a considerable inventory of such odd items as a bean, a respiration certificate, and a meteorite, and the order in which you use the stuff makes a big difference; for instance, use a nut in the wrong order at the beginning, and it won't be there to be picked up again later on. Save the game often or you'll spend a lot of time retracing your steps.



Woodruff encounters a sad Boozook.

Woodruff's world is also full of odd gadgets and formulas. He must rely whenever possible on the tobozon, a communications device that delivers a large amount of critical information. And don't disdain the seemingly mundane. In this game, something as common as a stain on the floor can have an important meaning.

The game's animation consists of basic cartoon-type drawings—it's pleasantly drawn, but don't look for fine renderings here. The simple graphics don't detract from the fun of exploring rooms and making choices, though. And Woodruff has the amusing habit of coming up with unusual ways to pass the time while he's waiting for you to make your next move. Don't be surprised if he practices his ballet steps or performs chest-muscle development exercises.

The game's satirical side shows up when you do make moves. The mood can even become political—the Boozooks' situation and the ruthless efficiency of the evil Bigwig's bureaucracy paint a nasty picture of government.

This offbeat strategy exercise isn't a place to look for pretty pictures. But if you like spending lots of hours in a weird little world, Woodruff and the Schnibble may just be for you.

Just the usual bunch of losers at the Bar of the Boozook and Human Friends.



There's got to be a better way to cross that river, don't you think?

The Bizarre Adventures of Woodruff and the Schnibble

Sierra On-Line
800-743-7725

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 486/25, 4MB RAM,
VGA, sound card
List Price: \$39.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This oddball game is worth the many hours you'll invest in it. Not for novices, though.

- (U) • Boots really like to be together. • Hopping will get you nowhere fast.
- (D) • Bashing the
- (-) tax collector doesn't really do much for you, but it sure is fun.
- (+) • Keep plugging at the clandestine gambling room; you'll need the struts. • There are many tobozons; the one you really need is Azimuth's. His insignia may lead you to it. • Think Pooh Lett loves the Bigwig? Don't despair too easily. • If you truly love Pooh Lett, make sure you master the chemistry of formulas. • All Jack the lovebird really needs to fly again is a few feathers. When he does, you won't see him again—for a while.

• Woodruff says he forswears violence. The thing is, he has to really mean it.

Iron Assault

By Christopher Lindquist

If clichés were illegal, Iron Assault would get the chair.

You've heard it all before: The year is 2094, a time when war is conducted by brave men encased in gigantic shells of robotic armor. An evil crime syndicate has taken over the Earth, and as a member of a rebel force, you must restore freedom to the world.

Iron Assault begins with an intro sequence worthy of the wretched *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Monochromatic live-action video mixes with stop-motion animations of plastic "battle machines" staggering around the screen in a kind of low-rent *Terminator* ripoff. A fuzzy shot of the inside of a bunker serves as the interface to your duty log, combat simulator, the network from which you receive your orders, and the mission bay.

When the missions start, the graphics only get worse. Think of it as Wolfenstein 3D without the speed

Iron Assault's graphics won't exactly blow you away.

especially the big ones. While you can usually run and blast circles around the opposition when out in the open, things get a bit hairy when you're trapped in a hallway with half a dozen rocket-launching LOBSTER-class machines.

As you progress, you're promoted and given control of small squads of one to three other robots. You can direct the friendlies to follow you around or order them to attack anything that moves. You can also set waypoints and command the other robots to march to them. Unfortunately, instead of simply hitting a key and telling a hapless buddy to get out of the way, you have to open the map, set a new course for him, and close the map. You'll be doing this a lot, because if you leave your boys alone, they're likely to keep running in front of your missiles. And don't expect help from your claustrophobic allies when you go inside a facility. They refuse to enter buildings.

The game does support two players via modem, but that's not enough to help this game measure up. Iron Assault might have been acceptable a couple years ago. But the competition has moved on, and so should you.



Later in the game, you'll get a squadron to command.



Your quarters and the game's front end.

or the color. Gray, brown, and white dominate the repetitive landscapes, while interior scenes appear darker than Doom and twice as blocky. The explosions don't sound too bad, but the music is amazingly irritating; luckily, you can turn it off. The CD-ROM holds only short snippets of voices.

At least learning the controls is easy. You can use the mouse, but the keyboard is easier to handle. Game play consists of moving forward and backward, turning, rotating your turret, sliding right and left, and performing such special functions as watching your radar, turning electronic countermeasures on and off, and accessing the combat map.

The interface isn't the only thing easy about this game. The first dozen or so levels are ridiculously gentle, with only minimal opposition. Eventually, things get tougher. The enemy robots don't seem to get any smarter, but there are a lot more of them,

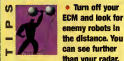
Iron Assault

Virgin Interactive
800-874-4607

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 4MB RAM,
MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse
Street Price: \$45-\$55

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★

Lousy graphics, poor sound, and an inability to keep up with the competition should keep Iron Assault warming the shelf.



• Turn off your ECM and look for enemy robots in the distance. You can see further than your radar, and the enemy 'bots are a turkey shoot if you catch them by surprise. • Run out of missiles? Try running over smaller 'bots at high speed. If you have a squad with you, target an enemy robot and direct one of your buddies to take him out. • Remember which side your missiles are on. It's possible to sneak around a corner just enough to launch without exposing your entire 'bot to enemy artillery. And the enemy 'bots are stupid enough to keep lobbing missiles into a mountainside while you reduce them to spare parts. • Use the mines—especially indoors. They pack a major wallop, you can carry a bunch of them, and aggressive enemy robots will follow you and walk right over them. Just don't torch your foot-sies on your own ordinance.

New device turns any electrical outlet into a phone jack

Engineering breakthrough gives you unlimited phone extensions without wires or expensive installation fees

By Charles Anton

You don't have to have a teenager to appreciate having extra phone jacks. Almost everyone wishes they had more phone jacks around the house.

When I decided to put an office in my home, I called the phone company to find out how much it would cost to add extra phone jacks. Would you believe it was \$158?

No more excuses.

Today, there are a thousand reasons to get an extra phone jack and a thousand excuses not to get one. Now an engineering breakthrough allows you to add a jack anywhere you have an electrical outlet. Without the hassle. And without the miles of wires.

Like plugging in an appliance. Now you can add extensions with a remarkable new device called the Wireless Phone Jack. It allows you to convert your phone signal into an FM signal and then broadcast it over your home's existing electrical wiring.

Just plug the transmitter into a phone jack and an electrical outlet. You can then insert a receiver into any outlet anywhere in your house. You'll be

able to move your phone to rooms or areas that have never had jacks before.

Clear reception at any distance. The Wireless Phone Jack uses your home's existing electrical wiring to transmit signals. This gives you sound quality that far exceeds cordless phones. It even exceeds the quality of previous devices. In fact, the Wireless Phone Jack has ten times the power of its predecessor.

Your range extends as far as you have electrical outlets: five feet or five hundred feet. If you have an outlet, you can turn it into a phone jack—no matter how far away it is. The Wireless Phone Jack's advanced companding noise reduction features guarantee you crystal-clear reception throughout even the largest home.

Privacy guarantee.

You can use The Wireless Phone Jack in any electrical outlet in or around your home, even if it's on a different circuit than the transmitter. Each Wireless Phone Jack uses one of 65,000 different security codes. You can be assured that only your receiver will be able to pick up transmissions from your transmitter.

Is the Wireless Phone Jack right for you?

The Wireless Phone Jack works with any single-line phone device. Almost anyone could use it, especially if...

- **Few jacks.** You want more phone extensions without the hassle and expense of calling the phone company.
- **Bad location.** You have jacks, but not where you need them most, like in the kitchen, garage, home office or outside on the deck.
- **Renting.** You want to add extensions, but you don't want to pay each time you move.
- **Other phone devices.** You have an answering machine, modem or fax machine you want to move to a more convenient place.

The Wireless Phone Jack System

consists of a transmitter (right) and a receiver (left). One transmitter will operate an unlimited number of receivers.



Unlimited extensions—no monthly charge. Most phone lines can only handle up to five extensions with regular phone jacks. Not with the Wireless Phone Jack. All you need is one transmitter, and you can add as many receivers as you want. Six, ten, there's no limit. And with the Wireless Phone Jack, you'll never get a monthly charge for the extra receivers.

Works with any phone device.

This breakthrough technology will fulfill all of your single-line phone needs. It has a special digital interface for use with your fax machine or modem. You can even use it with your answering machine just by plugging it into the Wireless Phone Jack receiver.

Special factory-direct offer.

To introduce this new technology, we are offering a special factory-direct package. For a limited time, the transmitter is only \$49. One transmitter works an unlimited number of receivers priced at \$49 for the first one and \$39 for each additional receiver. Plus, with any Wireless Phone Jack purchase, we'll throw in a phone card with 30 minutes of long distance (a \$30 value) for only \$9.95!

Try it risk-free. The Wireless Phone Jack is backed by Contrad's exclusive 30-day risk-free home trial. If you're not completely satisfied, return it for a full "No Questions Asked" refund. It is also backed by a one-year manufacturer's limited warranty. Most orders are processed within 72 hours and shipped UPS.

Wireless Phone Jack transmitter.....\$49 \$4 S&H
Wireless Phone Jack receiver.....\$49 \$4 S&H
save \$10 on each additional receiver—\$39
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Pizza Tycoon

By David Israel

The mob's muscling you for protection payoffs. Your waiters have taken a powder. You've appointed your pizza parlor with furniture that kids hate. Now someone tells you you're out of tomatoes. Worst of all, your bottom line is redder than those missing love apples.

What's a wanna-be tycoon to do? If gunrunning—yes, gunrunning—is not the first thing that comes to mind, then you may find this slapstick business simulation from MicroProse a bit much to swallow.

Without a doubt, *Pizza Tycoon* is the jumbo combo of finance sims. The designers have modeled a dizzying array of factors—everything from employee character traits to store furnishings intended to attract key demographic groups. You even get to make pizzas with a crude point-and-click

Point-and-click pizza maker—who woulda thunk it?



A motley crew of judges rates your pizza-making skills.

paint program that lets you use any of 65 ingredients. And don't forget that subplot involving

unfriendly relations with the Mafia.

Although you begin the game with a single restaurant and a small amount of cash, your goal is to become the most powerful pizza guy in the world—or at least in the game's 10 cities. You do this by driving your pizza joints to capture at least 5 percent of the savory pie market in each city. That may sound easy, but it's not.

The game's difficulty, however, stems not from artful design but from unbalanced game play. It's tough to win if you play fair. Instead, you often need to fall back on what is essentially a built-in cheat: You go to the Mafia and buy guns in one city and sell them at a higher price in another. In no time, you can infuse your fledgling startup with enough cash to dominate the competition.

Congratulations! Your new status in the world is wadguy.

In *Pizza Tycoon*, good guys usually finish last.

As long as you avoid getting caught, there's no downside to this approach.

Unfortunately, the rest of the game seems a bit of a chore. You end up trudging through myriad tasks just so you can achieve the victory conditions. The interface design doesn't help, forcing you to negotiate confusing layers of nested screens, buttons, and icons.

The program's German designers tried to circumvent the tedium—the prime challenge in creating any economic sim—by injecting the game with humor. But the amusement in

Pizza Tycoon goes no deeper than silly names—like Helga Helsbels—for each of the 94 player characters, or making the president of the East German bank look like Mikhail Gorbachev. Occasionally, the humor actually veers into offensive stereotyping, with pictures of greasy-looking Italians and big-nosed Jews.

The game's overall look is also less than appetizing. Although the product packaging claims it requires Super VGA, the graphics—320-by-200 screen resolution with 256 colors—are clearly just regular old VGA. The minimal sound effects are interrupted with music only during the occasional pizza-making competitions.

In short, *Pizza Tycoon* is a stale product from a publisher known for turning out fresher stuff.

Pizza Tycoon

MicroProse
800-695-4263

Developer: Software 2000
Platform: DOS CD, DOS
Requires: 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0,
Super VGA, mouse
List Price: \$47.95

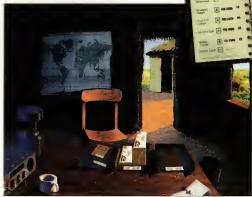
GAME PLAY:	★ ★
SETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★
Unbalanced game play and weak humor make <i>Pizza Tycoon</i> unpalatable.	

TIPS

♦ Watch the game clock. Each action eats up different chunks of game time. If you need extra time, set your character clock so you get up before 9 a.m. ♦ If you want to buy guns, you have to know the code words. When you go to the joke shop, tell the owner you're in the market for ice cream. The different flavors denote the kinds of illegal weaponry available for purchase. ♦ To get the Mafia off your back, you either have to run guns or carry out illegal missions for the mob.

Eco East Africa

By Christine Grech



That stack of mail doesn't just mean you're well-loved; it means you've got lots of work to do.

Who would've thought that running a wildlife refuge could be so complicated—or dangerous? But things are clearly out of control as you step into your new position as ranger at the Ethenba Wildlife refuge. Your predecessor was murdered by poachers, and the park has been neglected for too long. To fix things in Eco East Africa, you must build structures, hire staff, solicit funds, balance hunting and tourism requests with the well-being of the endangered species—and stay alive.

You perform most of your park administration from a cleverly designed desktop interface, which doesn't work as smoothly as you might like. Click on the "in-box" to open your stack of mail, including employment, hunting, and tourism requests, along with reports from workers, newspaper

clippings, and even

Keep an eye on the park with the notebook's map view.

letters from school children doing reports. You must deal with it a piece at a time, then decide whether to toss it, file it, or answer it. To reply, you click on the form-letter binder and choose the correct response from the many available choices, such as a Thank You note for a donation, a job-offer letter, or some general park information. You can also click on the order binder to buy supplies ranging from food to airplanes—if you've managed to obtain the cash from government grants, private donations, and hunting and tourism fees.

Unfortunately, when you're replying to mail, clicking on a desktop item or within the letter binder often boots you out of the desktop interface. This glitch is especially tedious because if you don't open and reply to your mail, you won't have the funds to run the park.

On the other hand, the game's notebook interface—from which you travel, check the water supply and animal populations, build structures, and deliver supplies—is easy to use, but not always intuitive. As a result, you'll find yourself referring to the indispensable color-paper manual, which shows you the way around the game clearly.

While in the notebook, time stands still. But as you travel the park or work from your desk, time passes at a rate of one hour of game time for every five seconds of real time. You can compress time to speed things up if you get bored.

At first, you'll devote most of your day to taking care of business in the notebook and at your desk. But as your park begins to grow and develop, you'll be able to spend more time in the field. There, you can visit camps, raid poachers, and consult with the Masai elder Lolamela and tourist-camp director Elsbeth Blair. These video-based characters—along with Marunda, your right-hand man—give you valuable hints.

If you'd rather not worry about survival, you'll enjoy Eco's non-competitive Tourist mode, which lets you wander the park, take in the sights, and get to know the animals. Even if you're out to win, take time to stop and smell the lion dung. It's the best way to fully appreciate Eco's standard-setting graphics and realistic animal sound effects.

No matter how you play, Eco offers realistic simulation of the sometimes-mundane mechanics of park management. If you have the patience to put up with a few bugs, some awkward game play, and the occasional delay, you'll be treated to beautiful visuals and a unique challenge.

Eco East Africa

IVI Publishing
800-432-1332

Developer: Viridis
Platform: Win CD
Requires: 486/25, 4MB RAM,
Windows 3.1, double-speed CD-ROM
drive, VGA
Street Price: \$45

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★

Eco East Africa is a unique sim that provides spectacular graphics, but less than stellar game play.

Before you do anything, build your headquarters. You can't really get started playing the game until it's finished, and that will take a week. While the headquarters is being built, take time to check out the sights in Tourist mode. Read the previous warden's journal. You'll find valuable clues about potential problems. Be diligent about opening and replying to mail. A simple "Thank You" note goes a long way. Don't forget to order binoculars. Your rangers can't catch poachers if they can't see them.



What it'll be: work or play?

SIMULATION

Bolo

By Steve Klett

Puzzle games are not my bag, so I admit I wasn't thrilled with the task of trying out Bolo, the latest brain-and-finger twister from Dongleware. But within 10 minutes, I was Bolo'd over.

Bolo is a redesign of a 1987 Atari game by the same name, and it's gotten much better with age. To get a mental picture of this highly addictive strategy/puzzle game, think Breakout meets Arkanoid with a little Pong, Tetris, and air hockey thrown in for fun.

Bolo's 50 "rooms" contain a variety of bricks laid out in unique patterns. You use a paddle and a marble-like "energy ball" to clear each level of bricks—without letting the marble get sucked into the black holes placed at inconvenient locations about the screen.

New types of bricks confront you as you progress through the rooms. For example, some bricks contain homing missiles, bombs, and mines that can destroy your paddle, while others attach the energy ball to an elastic band or return all the bricks to the screen, forcing you to start over.

Unlike many puzzle games where the levels get progressively more daunting, there appears to be no logical progression to Bolo's level of difficulty. Room five, for example, seems tougher than room ten. This makes the game less predictable and may even give you a moment of respite

after one of the many particularly difficult rooms. • Bolo's biggest problem, other than some minor screen flickering and the occasional slowdown, is its relatively weak and unsupported story line. According to the tale, you are a writer wrapping up an important project when sudden-

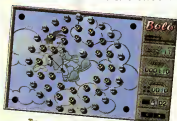
ly you are sucked into your computer by the evil Megahost. Seizing your vital data and spiriting you off to his castle, called Transelektrika, he challenges you to a life-or-death match of Bolo. If you succeed in clearing each of the castle's rooms of bricks, you get to return to your world, and all the data on your computer is restored. If you fail, Megahost gets your energy and you die.

If nothing else, this disposable story does help to tie the rooms together and create the semblance of an overall purpose. As you complete each level, the subtly textured and colored VGA backdrops resolve into attractively drawn scenes depicting the latest stage of your quest.

The game also contains five different background tracks by New Age composer Nik Tyndall. The soothing



Bolo's puzzles are as challenging as they are aesthetically pleasing.



Try not to hit all the bulbs, or you'll be in the dark.



A firm hand is your best bet on this level.



Often, you can change the orientation or shape of your paddle by clicking the mouse.

This is important because on some levels each wall represents a different gravitational attraction, meaning the energy ball is not always drawn to the bottom of the screen. • Pause the game by hitting the space bar each time you start a new room. This will give you a chance to decide on an initial strategy. • Once you tally 50,000 points, you get access to a practice mode that lets you try out all the levels. Save your game and use this feature to peek at the next room to avoid nasty surprises. • Pay attention to what bricks you knock out first. The order in which you clear the screen can help or hinder your cause. • If you're having trouble clearing a particularly stubborn brick, hit it harder. • A slow, methodical approach is usually best. If you get bored, simply smack the energy ball a little harder to increase the difficulty level.

Bolo
Dongleware Publishing
800-228-6996

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386, 4MB RAM,
MS-DOS 6.0, VGA, mouse, Sound
Blaster compatible
Street Price: \$39.99

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

With superb graphics, sound, and originality, Bolo is a breath of fresh air for Breakout and Arkanoid fans.

Jewels of The Oracle

By Paul Hyman

Madness made from common household items.



A simple matter of black and white. Or is it?

Feeeling a little masochistic? Been playing too many computer games that you can actually win? Well, here's a new challenge for you.

Following in the footsteps of *Myst* and *The 7th Guest*, *Jewels of the Oracle* poses 30 mind-boggling tasks. Complete a task and receive a jewel as your reward. And believe me, you'll earn those jewels. When you collect all 30, the game rewards you with...ah, but that's for you to see when you finish—if you finish. You'll realize that finishing *Jewels of the Oracle* will be no walk in the park as soon as you start the game. The first puzzle is trying to locate the puzzles. If you can't clear that hurdle, you may as well hang it up.

According to the legend of the jewels, 7,000 years ago a civilization of really smart people built the Domain of the Oracle. They used this secret underground tomb-like structure to practice their skills of logic and reason. Those who solved all the tasks went on to greatness;

those who failed were never seen again.

Now you get to match your wits with those same well-seasoned puzzles. In one of them, for example, you're handed a board with three white stones and three black ones. What are you supposed to do with them? Who knows? Another task asks you to make a logical connection between several objects, including a bowl, a chest, a table, a bracelet, a dagger, and a statue. Could it be that they're all covered in dust?

If you get completely stuck, the all-knowing but never-telling Oracle is available to hand out clues, but his little aphorisms are so maddeningly obtuse that you may feel like punching him out instead of asking him for advice.

Fortunately, Oracle's designers were thoughtful enough to let you skip puzzles and come back to them later. Even that becomes daunting as the unsolved puzzles begin to pile up. But keep trying. *Jewels of the Oracle* keeps you interested with magnificently crafted graphics combining rendered 3-D artwork and QuickTime movies. The music and ambient sounds are also appropriately haunting.

However, while *Myst* lets you explore a whole island, and *The 7th Guest* offers the opportunity to roam a mansion, Oracle sticks you in a dank dungeon with limited navigational abilities. Each puzzle begins with a trip to a well where you click



It all begins here, at the well.

Jewels of The Oracle
Discs Knowledge
Research
800-567-4321

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD
Requires: 486SX/25, 8MB RAM,
DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, Super VGA,
double-speed CD-ROM drive
Street Price: \$47

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★

Mind-boggling puzzles and impressive graphics combine to make this a challenging diversion for hard-core puzzle fans.

None of the puzzles are accessible until you've visited the Altar Room and smashed the jewels you'll find there.
• You can forfeit a puzzle and earn a jewel just for trying. But the stone isn't as valuable as the one you get for finding the solution. As a result, you'll get a different ending to the game than if you had completed all the tasks.
• Think you can just log on to your favorite online service and download the answers? Be warned: Some of the puzzles are randomized and have a different answer each time.
• In the maze, you must go to two places—one blue, one yellow and blue.
• To solve the locust puzzle, you must alternate the different color pegs as you move the pegs from one side to the other.

Laser Gaming

By Bill Meyer

American Laser Games shooters, such as *Mad Dog McCree* and *Who Shot Johnny Rock?*, have never broken the originality meter. No matter the time period or setting, the play's the same: You shoot at bad guys who pop out from behind various obstacles, find the loot, and take out the head honcho at the end.

Hoping to spice up the stew, American Laser Games has added some new ingredients—including more highly evolved objectives and plot involvement—to *Drug Wars* and *Crime Patrol*, its latest variations on the old family recipe.

Crime Patrol and *Drug Wars* treat you to parodies of *Kojak*'s '70s and *Miami Vice*'s '80s. Telly and Tubbs don't make guest appearances, but you will find a hairy-chested Escobar commanding an entourage of guerrillas and Gidgets in *Drug Wars*. And *Crime Patrol* introduces you to a tough-talking female cop and a detective in a leisure suit.

You begin *Crime Patrol* as a rookie cop who must shoot gang members, armed robbers, and street thugs. Gun down enough of them (while sparing the innocent bystanders), and you get promoted to detective, then to the SWAT team, and finally to the Delta Force—created to exterminate criminals threatening national security.

Drug Wars also has you on the move, but instead of climbing the ranks, you wander the map. As a federal drug enforcement agent, you assist a down-home sheriff and deputy in a small Texas town, then a donut-chomping Chicago cop. Do your job right and you get an assignment at the border and, finally, a chance to bag the drug cartel's kingpin at the source in South America.

The varied locations and characters and the progression of assignments and events add depth and



In *Drug Wars*, the guerrillas protecting the cartel's South American drug lab don't like strangers.



Once you make *Detective in Crime Patrol*, you'll gun for the criminal element in this strip bar.

personality to a game genre that is getting a bit tired. And if you like to see things blow up, you'll find a lot to enjoy in these new games. But what these games really need is better-quality video. The pictures are simply too blurry to let you appreciate the stunts and on-screen action.

For a true arcade experience, American Laser Games has also released its GameGun for PCs. Unfortunately, installing our prototype plastic GameGun slowed both games' audio to the point where they resembled an off-speed record. Even worse, the gun wasn't accurate enough to pick off thugs hiding in the corners of the screen. American Laser Games says it will iron out the GameGun's problems and ship the final version with software to make it work with all six of its PC titles. The GameGun does make game play more fun, but similar problems with the 3DO version of the GameGun make us a bit skeptical that everything will work perfectly.

On the plus side, both games install instantly, run even on ancient 386 computers, and aren't saddled with overblown price tags. But while it's still fun to blast away at the baddies, don't expect any brand new thrills.



♦ Memorize all the spots where enemies appear in each scene.
♦ Load and spray high windows and doors if you are repeatedly shot by an outside target you cannot see.
♦ For control and accuracy, return your gun sight to the middle of the screen after each shot—this way you will always be a half-screen away from each target at most.
♦ Get in the habit of reloading after every one or two shots so you have enough ammo to fire repeatedly at targets you don't hit the first time.
♦ Innocent bystanders always put their hands up.
♦ Some offenders get back up to fire away at you after they go down the first time.

Drug Wars, Crime Patrol
American Laser Games
800-863-4263

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386SX/25, 640KB RAM, DOS 3.3, VGA, Sound Blaster or compatible, mouse
List Price: \$39.95
GameGun price: \$54.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★

Crime Patrol and *Drug Wars* dress up American Laser Games' standard video shooting action, but both games need better audio and video.

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Tank Commander

By Steve Klett



The behind-the-tank view is your best survival bet.

I am not a tank simulation; I am an action game!" is Tank Commander's battle cry.

Domark's modern tank warfare title attempts to offer gamers the best of both worlds by combining arcade-action game play with a modicum of in-the-breach simulation. Unfortunately, the game excels at nei-

ther and ends up as middle of the road.

You command from one to four 62-ton United Kingdom Challenger II tanks for a bloody rampage through seven multiple-mission scenarios in Third World, Middle Eastern, and Eastern European hot spots.

But things don't start off well. While the game's box indicates that you can direct Abrams, Leopard, and T-72

tanks in addition to the Challenger, you can't; the other tanks are available only to the computer opposition. The same goes for helicopters. You can use the Gazelle for reconnaissance, but the Apaches are flown only by the bad guys.

If you still feel like playing after this disappointing discovery, you start a scenario commanding a single tank with a simple task, such as clearing a bridge of enemy machine-gun bunkers. Things heat up fast, and you soon face tougher targets such as multiple enemy tanks, helicopters, or even an entire base.

The game's keyboard controls take some get-

ting used to, but can be mastered with a little practice. You can choose from multiple viewpoints, including driver, gunner, and behind-the-tank perspectives. You can also adjust gun elevation and rotate the tank's turret independent of the tank's direction of movement. A map screen lets you pinpoint the location of enemy positions and direct the movements of your other tanks.

You have plenty of firepower at your disposal, including regular, heat-seeking, and armor-piercing shells as well as a flamethrower and a machine gun. Your tank is automatically armed with the various choices, depending on the mission. On rare occasions, you can even call in a squadron of A-10 "Tank Killers" for a helpful air strike.

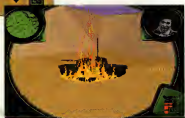
These weapons may sound like enough to handle any situation, but the game's quirks can render all this sophisticated weaponry as useless as a water pistol. For example, a couple of enemy soldiers armed only with rifles can quickly reduce your armored behemoth to scrap iron. The enemy can often shoot you well before you can even see him. In addition, the bad guys' flamethrowers and rocket launchers seem to have an uncanny ability to shoot very long distances as well as through walls and over hills.

Sure, there's plenty of sophisticated anti-tank technology

out there, but the game's unrealistic enemy abilities make it frustrating to play. After demolishing a half-dozen heavy Russian tanks, it's extremely annoying to be taken out by a lowly foot soldier armed with an AK-47.

Tank Commander includes head-to-head modem play and supports network

games for as many as four players, which could make up for some of the single-player shortcomings. But while the concept of an action-oriented tank sim may sound intriguing, the game's poor execution leaves it a couple shells short of a full magazine.



You may think this tank is history, but blast 'em to be safe.



Now you know why infantry are called lubricant by tank commanders.

Tank Commander
Spectrum Holobyte
800-695-4263

Developer: Domark
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/25, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 6.0, Sound Blaster-compatible
List Price: \$54.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★

With more attention to detail and better execution, Tank Commander could have blitzkrieged its competitors.

• If you find yourself amid of a bunch of badies, switch to map mode and set a waypoint

for your tank. This will put your challenger on automatic pilot and free your hands for choosing weapons, aiming, and shooting. • Move slowly whenever possible. Try to position yourself to take on only one target at a time at long range. Rushing into trouble will turn your tank into a tomb. • Use the helicopter's camera to survey your opposition—it just may save your life. • If you can, back out of enemy tank range and deal with enemy foot soldiers first. In this game, multiple rifles can be more dangerous than shells.

The Great Pinball Roundup

By Jay J. Ma

Where can you find deep-sea adventure, an African safari, space travel, and medieval entertainment all in the same place? No, it's not some time-traveling adventure game, it's old-fashioned pinball. A couple of recent collections of computer pinball games hope to tilt PC wizards in their direction. Pinball wizards are sure to find an appealing table in either set.

Epic Pinball CD from Epic MegaGames sports a collection of 12 classic tables—including Excalibur, Deep Sea, and Cyborgial—from Epic's three previous pinball releases; it also adds a bonus table called African Safari. These digital sims look like the real thing down at the corner bar, and include everything from fluid ball movement to fast-acting flippers and bumpers. You'll even get that same sinking feeling when your ball hits the drain.

The tables in Epic Pinball are a bit spare, so racking up big point totals requires some strategy. But if you're a more intellectual pinball fan, Epic is for you. African Safari, for example, makes scoring difficult, but provides many opportunities for extra balls. Meanwhile, Enigma is unpredictable, with targets that appear at random.

Beginners will like the configuration options, which let you add such score improvers as a low table angle to slow the game and up to five balls instead of the usual three. You can turn off the realistic games sounds if you want to play at the

office—or if they just prove too annoying during an extended session.

The games' controls are simple enough, too. The spacebar launches the ball, while the left and right arrow keys control the flippers. You can even nudge the sides of the table with the "z" and "f" keys. But bump too much or you'll light up the "Tilt" sign and watch the

table lock up while your ball rolls away.

Pinball Fantasies Deluxe from 21st Century Entertainment offers eight tables that are more complex: Partyland, Speed Devils, Billion \$ Gameshow, Stones 'n' Bones, Tarantula, Jailbreak, Kickoff, and Jackpot. Each table contains a slew of special targets and/or additional flippers to keep the action quotient—and scores—high. Fans of the multi-million-point tables with lots of tricks and a blurred ball will thrive here.

The tables are divided into two groups in the Deluxe collection: Fantasies Pinball and Pinball Mania. Billion Dollar, armed with three flippers and some serious point-racking opportunities, topped the Fantasies Pinball list. Tarantula from Pinball Mania, which has four flippers, required more hard work to use each of the hard-to-reach top flippers.

Like Epic's tables, Pinball Fantasies' realistic sounds remind you of the arcade, while the detailed graphics move smoothly across the screen, adding to the realistic feel of the controls. In Fantasies, the down arrow sets the silver ball in motion, but here the left and right Shift keys activate the flippers. The spacebar also lets you simulate bumping the table with your hip to get a little more action. But don't go too far, or you'll just be playing the drain.

Playing computer pinball instead of the real thing will keep you out of places you shouldn't be anyway, and both of these collections sport high-quality, detailed graphics. But both scroll the screen to follow the ball, providing a constant reminder that you're sitting in front of your computer, not hanging out with your buddies in the back room of the local tavern.



Pinball Fantasies supplies more action per ball.



Epic's tables are simple but fun.

Pinball Fantasies Deluxe

21st Century Entertainment
716-872-1200

Developers: Spidersoft, FrontLine Design
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 570K RAM, DOS 3.3, VGA, Sound Blaster-compatible
List Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Good graphics and lots of action keep Fantasies Deluxe on the top-scorers list.

Epic Pinball CD

Epic MegaGames
800-972-7434

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386, 640K RAM, VGA, Sound-Blaster compatible
List Price: \$64

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Epic Pinball CD is a dozen solid, if simple, tables of pinball action.

TIPS

- Get used to the game and practice the basics before aiming for special features, even if these promise more points.
- "Catching" a slow-moving ball with a flipper can give you a chance to catch your breath and plan your next shot.
- Use the end of your flipper to get the maximum leverage to send the ball all the way to the top of the table.
- In the Pinball Fantasies Deluxe tables, use the flipper keys (left and right Shift keys) to cycle the letters clockwise to complete a set.

Tony La Russa Baseball 3

By Donald St. John

Now that the baseball strike has thankfully ended, Oakland A's manager Tony La Russa, with some help from developer Stormfront Studios, is celebrating with the third version of the popular Tony La Russa Baseball game. But much like his A's ended the strike-shortened 1994 campaign, La Russa is destined to finish a close second in the 1995 gaming season.

Despite significant improvements over Tony 2, Tony La Russa Baseball 3 can't quite catch Accolade's Hardball 4, the baseball sim that sets the standard for graphics and game play. When all the runs are counted, a few critical performance problems cost Tony 3 the pennant.

On its own, Tony 3 makes no apologies. Fans of Tony 2 will instantly notice the huge uptick in graphics quality, achieved by rendering the player animations over live-action films of ballplayers. And while the lack of a Major League Baseball license means you won't see cap insignias or team nicknames, the new game still includes all 900-plus major league ballplayers and all 28 major league stadiums. Photos of the players are crystal-clear, and when you see Fenway Park's backdrop from the behind-the plate view, the Green Monster looks horrifyingly real.

From player stats to field dimensions, the game delivers an impressive attention to detail worthy of a Hall of Famer.

Game play is more like a utility infielder, however. Tony 3 features the full suite of options: computer vs. human play, human vs. human play (at the same keyboard), injuries, designated hitters, and player trades. And with the real-motion rendering, the players move realistically about the field while you watch from four different vantage points that change with the action. But when the ball goes into play, performance becomes an issue. Even on a Pentium P90 with 8MB of memory, a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, and a 64-bit local-bus video card, motion was noticeably jerky, despite selecting the game's most CPU-friendly settings. Getting the fielders to the



Tips from the master.

"Here's the windup, and the pitch..."

right spot and moving runners is no problem, though, using either keyboard or joystick. Also, the game's artificial intelligence is first-rate—players throw to the right bases and make fielding choices as they should.

Tony 3 isn't quite a front runner when it comes to calling the action, either. That's a shame, because Stormfront lined up the legendary Mel Allen and excellent modern-era broadcasters Hank Greenwald and Lon Simmons to handle the play-by-play. But their patter—while crisply transmitted and knowledgeable—lacks the innovative call-by-player-name feature of Baseball For Windows with Ernie Harwell. Instead, it refers to players by position. Also, the dialogue becomes slightly repetitive after a few innings.

On the other hand, Tony 3 does offer some distinctive features over other baseball sims...like Tony La Russa, for instance. The savvy manager offers useful strategy tips via video. Tony 3 also lets you download updated stats via modem from STATS On-Line throughout the season. You can even import teams from Tony 2 if you want to keep your previous seasons going. And a unique "general manager" feature lets you wheel-and-deal your way to a dynasty with



It's a close play at second.

Tony La Russa Baseball 3
Stormfront Studios
415-479-2800

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386/40, MS-DOS 5.0,
4MB RAM, VGA, mouse
List Price: \$59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Tony La Russa Baseball 3 is a canny, satisfying upgrade hobbled only by mediocre game performance.

U
L
T

- Know your pitchers' out pitches in real life, and you'll have an edge; Tony 3 replicates pitchers' actual repertoires.
- In Manager mode, you'll increase your odds of success by using the pitch-around and intentional walk functions on the tough hitters. • When pitching in Full Play mode (in which you do everything), tap the arrow key for your pitch to adjust pitch control. • Check your pitcher's control rating (in the player information window) frequently; he will tire as the game goes on.
- If you're not worried about a baserunner's speed, the "Play off bag" option may just save your butt in a hit-end-run situation. • Don't ignore the wind speed when you select a stadium (especially Candlestick Park), or you'll find that ball circle jerking away from you at the last second.

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Surrealistic Graphics: *The Dream Designers*
Art Department: *Samora Saint*

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The Dream Designers: 1994



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Saturn and PlayStation Head for the Home

By Peter Olafson

Saturn is in stores, PlayStation is on the way, and 3DO is still hanging on. Here's a look at some gaming titles already available for the next generation CD consoles—including some of the Saturn games. Note: *Some games are currently available only in Japan.*

Daytona USA for Sega Saturn sets the standard by which the next generation of 32-bit driving games will be judged. This splendid conversion offers a slightly knocked-down version of the fabled sit-down arcade racer, with a wonderfully ragged graphic tapestry, great corny music, three unique tracks, a field of up to 39 competitors, high configurability, and enjoyable quirks—like the ability to race the wrong way in full 3-D.

Caveats: Some of Daytona's atmospheric touches are tacky or transparent—the smoke from the wheels looks awful—and the depth of field could be greater. It's always a little troubling to watch distant scenery appear out of nothingness. But I'm picking nits. This really is a rolling start. (Sega; 800-733-7288; \$59.95)

Platform: Saturn

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

By comparison, **Ridge Racer** for the Sony PlayStation is a let-down. On the plus side, it handles better than Daytona USA; it's more of a driving game, while Daytona is more of an arcade game about driving. Its graphics are more fluid, too—it has the feel of sliding sideways through sharp turns down to a science.

But Ridge Racer's textures aren't nearly as rich. The loss of graphic clarity compared to the arcade game is all too noticeable, and the approach (variations on a single urban track) wears

thin quickly. (Namco; 408-922-0712; not yet priced)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Jumping Flash for the PlayStation isn't just a great game, it's a genuinely creative one. This inspired translation of standard two-dimensional platform game play—sidling up to precipices, bouncing off enemies' heads, and collecting spare change—introduces a new 3-D polygon world. The supremely artful result crams an incredible amount of stuff into each level. Deeply addictive and almost adventure-like in feel, this is the best PlayStation game released to date. (SCEA; 415-655-8000; not yet priced)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I have no idea what the name means, but **Panzer Dragoon** is utterly mind-boggling. Were Magic Carpet to be converted into a 3-D shoot-'em-up, it might look something like this Saturn game. Perched on the back of a dragon, you soar over sunken ruins, deserts, and lava flows. You don't have full freedom of movement, but can fire away at your enemies in all four directions. And the enemies are...well, put it this way: The giant burrowing worms on level two outpace any video-game boss I've seen, and they're just a standard monster. The ante just goes up and up and up. (Sega; 800-733-7288; \$59.99)

Platform: Saturn

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

As many as four players can hit the links in Sega Sports' adaptation of



Ridge Racer will have you going around in circles.

Pebble Beach Golf Links for the Saturn—by far the best golf game for a CD console system. Hosted by Craig Stadler, Pebble Beach features great sound and razor-sharp shots of the course, along with graceful player animations. Stadler dishes out helpful advice at every hole in an attempt to make a pro out of you. The game supports multiple camera angles, of which the Ball Cam view is perhaps the most exciting. However, like its real-life counterpart, the game plays a bit slowly and will probably appeal to only the truest golf fans. (Sega Sports; 800-733-7288; \$49.99) —Lawrence Neves

Platform: Saturn

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Virtual Hydlide for the Saturn, a Japanese import, hasn't been cleared for U.S. release at this writing. That may be on account of this 3-D role-playing game's speed, which is a little on the stodgy side. But the core of this game is genuinely absorbing. Using a behind-the-player view, this mission-based adventure sends you ranging across a rich (if random) countryside, well-supplied in rivers (which you can hear running), forests (populated with the odd killer tree), hills (some of which you can really climb), graveyards, and keeps inhabited only by a forbidding emptiness. There's nothing else like this. Pray for a conversion for the States. (Sega Enterprises; not yet available in the U.S.)

Platform: Saturn

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★



3-D shooters hit PlayStation with Kileak.



Take a magic dragon ride in Panzer Dragon.

If games were grades, **D** would be a B-. The rendered Geena Davis-like heroine whom you control in this 3DO graphic adventure has a wonderfully expressive face. The rooms are rendered in a gorgeous—yet grainy—style, and you don't flip through them sideshow fashion *a la* Myst, but rather scroll smoothly along scripted paths. The dense and terrifying atmosphere works in good measure because of the music, which perfectly punctuates the game's darker moments.

Unfortunately, the relatively basic puzzles are spread across two CD-ROMs in a game that's only slightly longer than its name. After a couple of hours' research, I was able to play through the Japanese version in about 45 minutes. The good news: D apparently has multiple endings. Warning: Some of the later non-interactive sequences are decidedly grisly. (Panasonic Software; 408-653-1891; not yet priced)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Anime meets Dragon's Lair in **Strahl** for 3DO, and they hit it off pretty well. The interactive animated sequences are nicely drawn and truly scary—real bad-dream stuff compared to Lair's Goofy-with-a-sword ethos—and you can start in several different spots. (The game apparently has 47 different endings.)

But Strahl plays all too much like Dragon's Lair: Hit the button or push the pad in the right direction at the right time, and that's about it. What really gets me is that the designers

lead you by the nose through the early stages of Strahl via screen-bottom direction arrows showing the right moves. If your game takes 17 minutes to complete, there's no need to tell the player how to do it. (Panasonic Software; 408-653-1891; \$59.95)

Platform: 3DO

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Kileak—The DNA Imperative for the PlayStation is Wolfenstein 3D in 32 bits, but with robots and a room-corridor-room structure that suggests a level randomizer at work.

In fact, Kileak's levels were designed, and designed well. The game's concept may be old-fashioned, but it's put together with skill and smarts. It features lots of bright, realistic textures in interesting (and sometimes non-orthogonal) configurations, attractive enemies, rendered gadgets, and some genuine puzzles. (SCEA; 415-655-8000; not yet priced)

Platform: PlayStation

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Deadalus (not to be confused with The Daedalus Encounter for the PC) resembles Kileak in many ways, but it's just not as good. The only Saturn game I've seen that didn't earn a piece of my heart, Deadalus is as mundane as Kileak is stylish, with squat, stupid opponents, dull-looking walls, and monotonous play. I'm told that there are some neat twists deep in the game, but I can't imagine anyone being persistent enough to find 'em. (Sega Enterprises; not yet available in U.S.)

Platform: Saturn

Rating: ★ ★

From the same school comes **Crime Crackers** for the PlayStation. All I can say is "Don't waste your time." The anime characters in this role-player are just too cute for words, and the 3-D scrolling graphics aren't anything special. There is one notable feature: You really have to aim at enemies. (Sega Enterprises; not yet available in U.S.)

Platform:

PlayStation

Rating: ★

Clockwork

Knight was among the first Saturn games to appear in Japan, and it's easy to imagine the sensation this platformer must have created: A Nutcracker Suite escapee rendered for admission to Donkey Kong Country. The game is still a beauty, shining like chrome, loaded with charming detail, beckoning brightly to all corners.

But it's a measure of how quickly Saturn games have already advanced that Clockwork Knight no longer seems quite so special. Like Gex for 3DO, despite all the sweet extras, it's still a platform game. (Sega; 800-733-7288; \$39.99)

Platform: Saturn

Rating: ★ ★ ★



Platform games like Clockwork Knight look great on a Saturn.

3DO • Saturn • CD-I
PlayStation • Jaguar

Console Yourself

By Christopher Lindquist

Sega's surprise early launch of the Saturn has set the high-end video game world on its ear. Some game makers—and retailers—in the Sony and 3DO camps seemed a bit peeved that their competition might have a platform to stand on earlier than expected. But while the PlayStation may arrive after the party has started, some of its games look too cool to ignore. 3DO, meanwhile, created a stir with the power of its proposed M2, but some longtime 3DO boosters are already defecting to the new machines.

Crystal Dynamix made its name with 3DO games, but **3D Baseball '95** will debut on the Saturn this fall and the PlayStation by year-end. This first title in the Championship Sports line features beautiful 3-D-rendered stadiums.



It's a dark road to revenge in Crystal Dynamix's **Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain**.

plans a pair of adventure titles: **Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain**, a dark story about Kain, a vampire on a gory trail of revenge, and **Blazing Dragons**, a humorous romp created by former Monty Python member Terry Jones (director of *The Life of Brian*). Both games run on Saturn and PlayStation, but not 3DO.

Look for great graphics action in Sony Imagesoft's **WarHawk**, a 3-D shooter that has you zooming at high



It's fast action combat to the finish in **RazorWing**.

speed over spectacular landscapes while trying to take out the enemy. It should hit the PlayStation sometime this fall, with a PC version slated for the holidays. Also look for Sony's **RazorWing**. Fly any of four different hovercrafts against enemies who are out to destroy the Empire.

Virgin Interactive Entertainment is also jumping heavily onto the PlayStation and Saturn bandwagons in time for the holidays. Both new boxes will see **SPOT Goes to Hollywood**, a 3-D platform adventure featuring 7UP's trademark dot, and **3-Decathlon**, which features all ten Olympic decathlon events.

Time Warner makes instant history on the Saturn with the classic **VR. Virtua Racing**. Though no longer state of the art for racing games, some

Saturn owners may want this one around for old time's sake.



Atari ups the ante with **Jaguar VR**.

You'll also find more than 700 major-league ballplayers and color commentary by CNN's Van Earl Wright. If the game play matches the graphics, this could be a home run. Crystal also

3DO owners won't be left totally out in the cold. Origin Systems plans to support 3DO with its first non-PC game, a 3-D Battletech-style shooter called **Prowler**. Look for it this fall on 3DO, and later for PlayStation and Saturn.

Saturn will get a MechWarrior touch too, in **Battletech: Gray Death Legion**, from Absolute Entertainment. Let's just hope this one comes off better than the company's last robotic escapade, the abysmal *Rise of the Robots*.

And just so you don't think this is a four-horse race, Atari has unveiled **Jaguar VR**, a one-pound virtual-reality header for the Jaguar system. Jaguar VR will ship by year-end for \$300. Virtuality has signed up to develop **Zone Hunter** for the system.



Origin hits 3DO with a bang in **Prowler**.



Dark Forces Official Player's Guide

By Jeff Hoff

The Empire is up to some new tricks in Dark Forces, the exciting Star Wars game. Armed with over 240 pages of tips, strategies, tactics, maps, and intelligence secrets, you'll need this guide to survive 14 grueling missions and save the Alliance.

\$18.95

BK-315

Platform: IBM-PC CD-ROM

Full Throttle Official Player's Guide

By Jo Ashburn

Outwit Little Todd, jump the Poyahoga Gorge and survive the deadly demolition derby with this strategy guide. This guide gives you a complete walk through, hint section and detailed puzzle inventory. With 240 pages of tips and strategies, this book is the Full Throttle enthusiast's guide to success.

\$18.95

BK-335

Platform: IBM-PC CD-ROM



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Make Doom Go Boom!

You haven't really experienced Doom until you've heard the half-human horrors breathing a guttural "Yes, Yes, Yes" as you turn a corner, or the fingernails-on-a-black-board sound of an Imp clawing you to pieces.

The tinny speakers shipped with most multimedia computers simply can't deliver this kind of sonic fun. For maximum impact, you need a set of high-quality speakers attached to your PC or Mac. Today, state-of-the-art means self-powered speakers equipped with separate subwoofers for extra punch in the low end.

To hear what's what, we checked out five of the best three-piece systems. Our listening panel evaluated the Altec Lansing ACS-53, Audiophile ProSound 5A/SW 300 Combo, Bose Acoustimass Multimedia, Advent Powered Partners AV622, and Cambridge SoundWorks' SoundWorks.

All the speakers sounded great, but varied greatly in price (from less than \$200 to about

systems. We looked at the least expensive model, the sub-\$200 ACS-53. The system is a breeze to set up: Just plug in the subwoofer, connect a two-pronged patch cord from the subwoofer to the control satellite, plug the input cord into your sound-card jack, and then run another patch between the satellite speakers. The power cord and subwoofer patch are plenty long enough to reach the power source or the control satellite no matter how you place the speakers, but the speaker patch could have been longer to allow better spacing of the satellites around the computer.

The ACS-53 puts volume, treble, and bass controls right on the face of the satellites, which are the height and width of a fat romance novel. The

shoe box-

size subwoofer on the floor—most likely underneath your desk—this is a real back saver. (The higher-end \$250-\$300 ACS 300.1 model distributes On/Off, balance, and four other controls across both satellites.)

The ACS-53 produces precise, clear sound, especially on the high end, and we could detect no extraneous noise when music or sound wasn't being played. But if

you're looking for big, booming bass, this 27-watt setup may leave you hungry. The bass control on the subwoofer adds some bottom end, but if you really want to rock, you may want to move up to the 36-watt ACS 300.1, which offers a more powerful subwoofer and higher-quality clamshell satellite speakers. (Altec Lansing; 800-648-6663; PC/Mac, street price \$140-180)

Audiophile ProSound 5A/SW 300 Combo

The Audiophile ProSound 5A/SW 300 Combo is a modular system designed with upgradability

in mind. Instead of placing the amplifiers inside the speaker enclosures, Audiophile powered the system's satellites and subwoofer with a 20-watt external amplifier that also houses the volume and power controls.

This setup allows you to connect as many as four satellites, but makes connections somewhat less than intuitive. The use of home-stereo copper wire instead of standard

computer inputs and cords makes installation more difficult. You're forced to cope with such things as positive and negative leads and spring-release clasps, but you can connect the speakers to your home system. To Audiophile's credit, the inclusion of long speaker wires gives you plenty of placement options.

The Audiophile produces clean, distortion-free sound rather than big volume and bass. The cigar box-size satellite speakers don't rely on compression circuits to crank up the volume, giving you a wider, more natural dynamic range. Also, the Audiophiles' wooden speaker cabinets produce better natural acoustics than plastic.

But if you want big volume and bass for high-impact gaming, the foot-high subwoofer's noticeable but polite bottom end may leave you underwhelmed. In fact, Audiophile omits a bass control. At \$299, the Audiophile system may not be a bargain, but it does have a beautiful high end. (Audiophile; 800-727-6863; PC/Mac, \$299)



The reasonably priced 5A/SW 300 Combo from Audiophile boosts the bottom end, but can't crank the volume.



Altec Lansing's affordable ACS-53 emits clean, undistorted trebles—and wimpy bass.

\$600), maximum volume, bass response, convenience, and ease of setup. Overall, the Advent won the money-is-no-object prize, while the SoundWorks offered the best value.

Altec Lansing ACS-53

If you're looking for flexibility, you'll find it in Altec's extensive line of three-piece speaker

Bose Acoustimass Multimedia Speaker System

If you want sound that's good and loud and don't mind paying for it, you'll love the Bose Acoustimass Speaker System. The Acoustimass's sizable 18-inch-long bass speaker/amplifier produces a booming low end—just perfect for the shotgun blasts and other unfriendly fire in your favorite action games. Detonating the boom is the bass module's bi-amplification system, which delivers 50 watts to the bass driver and 20 watts to each satellite. This system has the fattest, richest bass of all five units we tested.

But big volume with big bass aren't the only benefits of the Acoustimass. The system also has enough volume range to please music lovers. In addition, the Bose system's compact softball-size satellite speakers take up little space on your desktop. The Acoustimass also comes with enough copper speaker wire to separate satellites at opposite ends of the room.

The Acoustimass isn't perfect, though: High frequencies can get a bit muddy at higher volumes, but considering the system's volume capacity, the slight noise and distortion are easy to ignore. And the precise volume, bass, and treble controls are inconveniently located on the subwoofer, not on a satellite. Like the Audiophile system, it would have been better for Bose to provide computer connectors and cables rather than the harder-to-connect composite cables and spring-release clasps. In general, though, if you're willing to shell out almost \$700, the Bose Acoustimass Multimedia system won't disappoint. (Bose; 800-444-2673; PC/Mac, \$699)



If you're willing to pay top dollar for full, resonant bass, listen to Bose's Acoustimass speakers.

Advent Powered Partners AV622

Advent's AV622 30-watt, stereo tuner-sized subwoofer is full-sized equipment, and with this size comes power. Though it doesn't have the loudest bass, this \$299 system provides a lot of bang for the buck. The Advent's small 8-watt satellite speakers are remarkably crisp and distortion-free, even at top volumes.

Want real excitement during high-octane action games? This system picks up both the high and low end and balances them so well that you'll think your games are exploding around you. While the Advent's bass amplification can't match the Bose system's, its overall balance and clarity are even better.

Like the Bose Acoustimass, the Advent's smallish, poorly marked controls are inconveniently located on the subwoofer. But when it comes to setup, the Advent system wins hands down. Just patch the speakers into the subwoofer, connect the system's hybrid RCA cord/speaker input into the sound-card jack, and plug in the bass speaker. On the other hand, the power cord and speaker wires could have been longer. Overall, though, the Advent gives top performance at a reasonable price. (Advent; 800-477-3257; PC/Mac, \$299)

Cambridge SoundWorks

If you want the highest quality sound at the lowest possible price, look no further than Cambridge SoundWorks' SoundWorks system. (This system won *E!*'s Editors' Choice Award for Best Hardware

You'll pay for the Advent AV622's excellent sound.



Upgrade; see March 1995, page 49.)

For less than \$200, you get surprisingly good high, middle, and low sound frequencies in a truly compact package. The SoundWorks system won't play as loud as the Bose and Advent sys-

tems, nor is the bass as deep or full. It also seemed to buzz and hiss a bit during quiet moments. But at this price, the SoundWorks system has an amazingly rich, balanced sound you can't ignore.

The SoundWorks system falls short in terms of control. It has no controls on the baseball-size satellite speakers and only a hard-to-reach bass control on the back of the car-battery-size subwoofer. You can



For well-balanced sound at a bargain-basement price, you can't beat Cambridge SoundWorks' SoundWorks system.

remedy some of these limitations by replacing the input cord with a \$13 one that features a clip-on volume control. In addition, attaching the copper speaker cables to the back of the subwoofer is frustrating because of the narrow entry area. Adding controls to the satellites and using more appropriate computer-speaker cords would make SoundWorks the best overall system. Right now, it isn't, but Cambridge has simply outpriced the competition. Even so, it's a good system at a great price. (Cambridge SoundWorks; 800-367-4434; PC/Mac, \$199.99)

Windows 95: Fun & Games?

You've heard the hype. You've seen the stories. The age of Windows 95 is upon us. But just what the heck is Windows 95, and what does it mean for people interested in games and multimedia?

Well, if Windows 95 lives up to Microsoft's billing, it could mean the end of multimedia as we know it—and that's a good thing. No more

ability to sell the new operating system to those of us still fairly happy with the entertainment titles we already own.

Unfortunately, it appears that compatibility may be Windows 95's Achilles' heel. While the vast majority of Windows multimedia titles and games worked fine on our late beta copy of Windows 95, some DOS games ran extremely slowly, others ran without sound support, and still others wouldn't run at all.

Indeed, we had to remove Windows 95 from one of our test machines when continuing incompatibilities made it difficult to test new games. However, the commercial version of Windows 95 has not yet shipped, and Microsoft still claims it will fix these problems by the August ship date. Of course, we can also expect an ongoing series of upgrades as the infant operating system

Getting Deeper

Even if compatibility problems linger, Windows 95 has plenty of enticements. Most importantly, the new Plug and Play standard should go a long way toward alleviating the PC world's hardware headaches. The standard's goal is to let you connect new peripherals and have the operating system do the rest—determine what type of hardware has been installed, what settings it uses, and what drivers it needs. Plug and Play sounds wonderful, and it is—when it works. But a true Plug and Play PC requires more than just Windows 95. You also need a Plug and Play-compatible BIOS (the chip that controls the basic input and output functions on your PC) and Plug and Play peripherals.

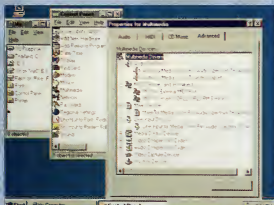
Unless you bought your system in the last year or so, you probably don't have a Plug and Play-ready BIOS. Likewise, most older sound cards, drive controllers, and video cards don't support Plug and Play either. In some cases, though, you may be able to upgrade your old BIOS by contacting the system's manufacturer.

Fortunately, you can still reap some of Plug and Play's benefits. When we installed Windows 95 on an older 486/66 system, for example, it managed to install the correct drivers for all of our peripherals except a Kensington track ball. Luckily, Windows 95 doesn't require a mouse for basic operations, so we were able to correct the driver problem and be on our way in a matter of minutes.

Gaming Gains

Windows 95 also offers major boons specifically for multimedia and gaming. For starters, Windows 95 is a "multithreading" operating system. In English, that means Windows 95 games can spawn "threads," separate processes that run simultaneously. For example, a sophisticated combo flight sim/economic strategy game could spawn threads for the real-time economic model while letting you fly your Lear Jet at the same time; each thread would get the processing power it needs to run smoothly.

In addition to performance improvements over Windows 3.1, Windows 95 has the right

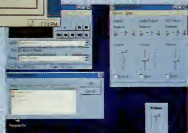


Windows 95 sports a simplified user interface.

fiddling with jumpers, IRQs, and DMAs to get new games and hardware up and running, plus a lot of other goodies to make things go faster and smoother. But Microsoft took a mighty big bite when it undertook Windows 95, and now it's time to see if the company can chew.

Underneath the covers of its somewhat Mac-like interface, Windows 95 is an almost completely new operating system designed to take full advantage of 32-bit processors such as Intel's 486 and Pentium chips. "Almost completely new?" you ask. Yep. To remain compatible with the largest possible number of DOS and Windows 3.1 titles, Windows 95 contains some code with DOS fingerprints.

It's a compromise, but probably a smart one. Even if Microsoft had been able to build in some nifty new features at the expense of backward compatibility, such a decision would undoubtedly have crippled the company's

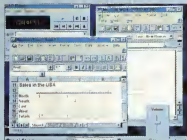


Included multimedia controls make life a lot easier.

grows and matures. Consider the evolution of the original Windows, for example, from the virtually unusable early versions (does anyone remember Windows 286?) to today's relatively stable and solid 3.11. If Microsoft does not manage to achieve complete compatibility, however, DOS game fans should be wary about dumping their current operating system. While Windows 95 will offer a "dual-boot" feature that will let users switch back to their old DOS version, it may not be worth the hassle.

stuff to make a truly usable—perhaps even spectacular—gaming platform. To that end, Microsoft supplies a first-person 3-D action game, called *Hover*, with the operating system. And it's a far cry from *Minesweeper*.

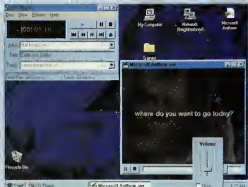
Several Windows 95 features help it succeed in gaming where Windows 3.1 failed. Windows 95 includes a set of application programming interfaces, or APIs, that let developers build higher-performance games than those possible under Windows 3.1. These APIs provide high-speed access to graphics-acceleration hardware, a relatively easy way to create and mix sound, simplified multiplayer game connections, and support for digital peripherals such as advanced game controllers. The APIs, in conjunction with Microsoft's Game Software Developers Kit, give game builders a fighting chance to create robust, high-speed games that equal anything available under DOS—minus the tech-support and configuration hassles.



Most older DOS and Windows programs should run fine under Windows 95.

Windows 95 will also support true high-speed 3-D gaming. Earlier this year, Microsoft purchased RenderMorphics, maker of the Reality Lab 3-D graphics library. This library gives game developers an easy way to create 3-D objects that can take advantage of the 3-D acceleration chips soon to be found on many graphics cards. With the Reality Lab library and a supported accelerator card, look for smooth-motion 3-D games in the *Virtua Fighter* vein running under Windows 95.

Unfortunately, not all of these components show up in the current beta copy of Windows 95, so we couldn't test them. Worse, they're not going to ship with the first commercial release, either. Instead, game developers will have to include them with their games and add them to the operating system during their product's installation process.



Now hooks help video look better.

Even so, several game companies have already jumped on the Windows 95 bandwagon. These early adopters include *Mindscape*, *Accolade* (which has already shown off a Windows 95 version of *Super Bubsy*, a fast-action scrolling game), and *Magnet*. And you can be certain that Microsoft's Home division will have a few Windows 95 titles up its sleeve, too.

Microsoft will also include a slick-looking pinball game in a Windows 95 add-on called the *Plus! Pak* for Windows 95. The *Plus! Pak* should be available before the end of the year and will include the pinball game, a data compression program, and a World Wide Web browser.

Multimedia Moves

There's more to life than games, of course; there's multimedia, and Windows 95 boosts multimedia titles in several ways. Microsoft's Display Control Interface (DCI) lets titles with video take advantage of ever-more-common video acceleration cards, resulting in larger, smoother video playback, right up to full screen in many cases. Windows 95 also supports the enhanced CD or "CD Plus" standard, which lets you drop combination audio/data CDs into either your PC or your audio CD player without worrying that the data tracks will blow out your speakers. And forget about having to hunt for the audio controls: The taskbar contains a master volume control for your sound card. Finally, Windows 95's AutoPlay feature lets developers create titles that start automatically when you drop the disc in the drive—no more hunting for the Setup or Install programs.

Windows 95 interface improvements don't specifically relate to games or multimedia, but they can still make your gaming experience more pleasant. Say goodbye to Program Manager, for example, and make way for a streamlined, Mac-like interface. There are no

menus to navigate; instead, you simply click on icons such as "My Computer" to call up ever-deepening lists of utilities and applications. As on the Mac, you simply click on icon names to change them, drag a box outline around multiple icons to select them, and delete icons by dragging them to the "Recycling Bin," Windows 95's politically correct version of the Mac trash can.

The convenience improvements don't end there. Every time you start an application, its name and symbol appear on the Taskbar at the bottom or side of the screen, making it a snap to switch between running applications. The Taskbar's Start button brings up customizable nested menus containing applications, system setup utilities, and documents. And if you're one of the few who actually like Windows 3.1's File Manager, you'll love the Windows Explorer, which gives you in-depth looks at all your available drives, including file size, type, date, drive size, and available space.

So, when does the future of games and multimedia begin? At press time, Microsoft was still holding firm to a ship date this month for Windows 95. But many industry pundits claim the company won't be able to do it. The delays



CD Plus support is built into the operating system.

have already hurt game developers and multimedia makers working on titles for the new operating system.

When Windows 95 finally does ship, gamers and multimedia fans will want to approach it cautiously. No new operating system ever ships bug-free, and you have to weigh the possibility that your favorite game won't run properly against the benefits of Windows 95's new features. You may want to bide your time until you see a hot new Windows 95 title that you simply must own—or until you're tired of all your old DOS games.

S.O.S.

Choosing local bus standards, revving up big hard drives, and picking the best system for the game.

Catching the Right Bus

I've heard there are a couple "local bus" standards out there, including VESA and PCI. What's the difference? Is one better than the other? Which one should I look for in a new Pentium?

Eric Stills
Nashua, NH

You probably won't have to worry about which is the "better" bus for much longer. PCI has the full force of Intel behind it, and the vast majority of Pentium systems around these days use PCI as their exclusive local bus.

That's not necessarily a bad thing. For starters, PCI directly supports Plug and Play, which lets your computer and operating system (such as Windows 95) automatically determine what kind of peripherals are available on your PC and how to configure them. Also, on a Pentium, PCI can transfer data at up to twice the rate of VESA local bus, or VLB.

PCI's biggest disadvantage is that its new slot design fits only PCI cards. In a pinch, VLB slots can double as standard ISA slots to let you hook up an old-style modem or sound card.

Early on, some people avoided PCI because few graphics-card and disk-controller vendors made products that used the bus, but almost every manufacturer now makes both PCI and VLB versions of their cards.

Finally, be warned that while some Pentium systems claim to support both PCI and VLB—letting you use your older VLB cards now while providing an upgrade path for the future—these systems may not deliver all of PCI's performance benefits. Your safest bet is to go with a PCI-only system.

If you already own a VLB system, don't worry. You should continue to see a good selection of add-in cards for your system for some time to come. But if you're looking for the cutting edge of PC hardware, PCI is definitely the way to go.

Getting to Big Disks—Fast

Windows users who are familiar with the various built-in options available for increasing Windows' speed and memory capacities know about things like 32-bit disk access and permanent swap files.

What some people may not realize is that 32-bit disk access does not work on hard drives larger than 528MB. Do you know if 32-bit disk access will work on a

terms, your system's BIOS—or "basic in/out system," the code that lets the CPU talk to peripherals—must support certain standard ways of talking to hard drives. The Phoenix Enhanced BIOS specification is one such standard that Windows 95 will understand. Windows 95 will also support 528MB-plus drives that use disk managers such as OnTrack's Disk Manager (version 6.03 or greater) or EZ-Drive from MicroHouse.

Now, how do you know whether your system meets these requirements? Your best bet is to check with the computer's manufacturer or the store where you bought it. Better yet, Windows 95 should be able to check out your system and automatically determine the fastest way it can get to your hard drive.

Silent Windows

My sound card works just fine when I play games in DOS, but I don't hear anything when I'm using Windows. How can I get it to work?

Sean Simmons
San Francisco, CA

Okay, the DOS games work, so we can assume that your speakers are hooked up properly. After that, you can try several things to fix a PC that's soundless under Windows.

First, make sure you installed the Windows drivers that came with your sound card. If you're sure you did this correctly, go to the Control Panel in the Main group and click on the Sound icon. Make sure the Enable System Sounds check box is selected, then click the Test button. If you hear a sound, everything should be OK. If not, find the sound mixer for your sound card (an icon for it should be located in your sound card's program group). Make sure the volume controls are set quite high and go back to try the Test button again.

If you still don't hear anything, check your sound card's manuals for any troubleshooting info, or call tech support. Isn't it so nice that Windows removes all those pesky configuration problems?

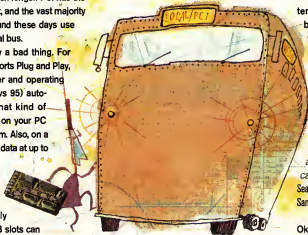
528MB disk drive if you partition the drive into sub-528MB volumes? If not, will Windows 95 support 32-bit disk access for larger drives?

Mike Grattan
Salinas, CA

Well, according to Microsoft, the short answers to your questions are "No" and "Yes."

But I suppose you want more info than that, so here's the scoop. Even if you partition a drive larger than 528MB into two "logical" volumes of less than 528MB each, you still can't use the faster 32-bit disk access in Windows 3.1 (16-bit access is standard).

Windows 95 solves that problem—at least in some cases. For Windows 95 to support a "large" IDE drive, your computer must meet certain technical requirements. In general



The Best Place to Play?

Help! I have both a 3DO Multiplayer and a Pentium PC, and I've noticed that many games are coming out for both 3DO and PC. Which version of these games should I buy? After seeing *Rebel Assault* on my friend's PC, I bought it for my 3DO, but it didn't look nearly as good. On the other hand, *FIFA Soccer* for 3DO absolutely blows away the PC version.

Steven Bouchie
Buffalo, NY

You've basically answered your own question: Which version to buy depends completely on the game. High-res Super VGA titles that will stun you on a PC take some serious graphics hits when played on a TV with a 3DO Multiplayer, while high-speed action games that rely on 3DO's 3-D graphics handling will seem stuck in the mud on a PC.

That's beginning to change, however: A wave of 3-D video acceleration boards due for the PC this fall will bring high-quality, fast-action sequences to computer screens as well. So PCs should soon be able to handle games like *FIFA Soccer* in a much more impressive manner.

All we can say is, "Be careful out there." If you see a game that looks great on a PC, don't assume it will translate well to your 3DO and vice versa. *E2* covered this phenomenon earlier in the year ("The Playing Fields," February 1995, page 46) and we'll occasionally review games as they appear on new platforms, noting any differences. In the meantime, spend some time trying out new titles at the store, or get access to an online service like America Online or CompuServe and ask other gamers about their experiences.

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INTERACTIVE QUARTERLY
AMERICA'S PREMIERE ADULT CD-ROM MAGAZINE

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Finishing Moves



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUNSON

CATHOLIC SCHOOL INTERACTIVE

Catholic School Interactive is a unique first-person-perspective adventure that combines elements from many popular games to recreate the thrills and chills of the Catholic School experience. The ultimate K-through-12 experience comes in a special patent-leather jewel case with tartan lining.

Goal To make it to graduation without damaged knuckles, bad report cards, or hairy palms.

Highlights In the spirit of *Doom*: Grab all the weapons you see (rubber bands, spitballs, inkwells, gum) and use them to fend off bullies, clergy, and the freckle-faced pigtail demon. Deny everything if you get caught.

In the spirit of *Glider Pro*: Keep paper airplanes out of Sister's sight, or you'll be clapping erasers after school.

In the spirit of *Games For Her In-*

teractive's *McKenzie & Co.*: Score the coolest date to the prom...but no slow dancing when you get there.

In the spirit of *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*: Nun with a ruler on your six! Break! Break!

In the spirit of *Mortal Kombat*: Who's that at level 40? Could it be...Satan???

And consider these clever add-ons In the spirit of interactive encyclopaedia titles: *Compton's Interactive Catechism*, the ultimate FAQ (frequently asked questions) on CD-ROM, complete with hypertext biblical references and video interviews of the 12 apostles. Bonus game: Name That Altar Boy lets you guess the identities of 25 famous faces from their altar-boy photos.

In the spirit of Mangia cookbooks on disc: *Cafeteria*, a recipe guide for mystery meat, gray veggies, fish sticks, and green Jell-O.

Games with Something XXtra

The video erotica industry has made big business out of misappropriating movie titles with releases like *Pulp Friction* and *Honey I Blew Everybody*. Maybe the same thing will happen in the interactive arena. Are you ready for...

- **Schwing Commander III** Grab your stick and take to the skies.
- **Panic in the Dark** Wait a minute! Who are you?!
- **TIEd-Up Fighter** Struggle against the tight grasp of the dark side of the Force. Escape to a new freedom that only the adventurous can enjoy.
- **S/M Tower** Mix kinky proclivities with good, solid business principles to create a successful high-rise dungeon.
- **SimOrgy 2000** You decide where to place mirrors, mattresses, and con-

dom machines, then sit back and watch the fun.

- **Microsoft Boob A** warm, nurturing interface for your PC.
- **Johnny Pneumatic** Our pumped-up star makes like a jackhammer.
- **XXX-Wing** Perfect your skills and learn the kind of stunts that'll earn you admission to the Mile-High Club.
- **Magic Carpetburns** See what happens when too much Mana starts rubbing you the wrong way.
- **Pump-It Motel** Take a mysterious trip to a strange, dank place where the rooms rent by the hour.
- **Total Contortion** Passion and intrigue—with a twist.
- **Kink's Quest VII The Princeless Bride**—an all-girl adventure.
- **Millennium Action** Tonight I'm gonna party like it's 1999.
- **Club Head** Use your imagination.

Of course, some game titles don't need to be changed to reveal their erotic potential. Just think about...

- Alone in the Dark**
- Blown Away**
- Day of the Tentacle**
- Dominus**
- Double Switch**
- Eat My Photons!**
- Gadget**
- HardBall IV**
- Jump Raven**
- PegLeg**
- Rise of the Robots**
- Slam City with Scottie Pippen**
- Snatcher**
- Take Your Best Shot**
- The Silver Seed**
- 'Nuff said.**



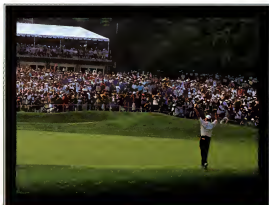
The first ever Mac CD golf game to deliver it all. And if you can't sink the pressure punts, you'll never cut it on the TOUR.

Our nine TOUR pros do more than simply show their faces. Their swings are digitized into the game.

Challenge the pros or be one of them as you drive it down the fairway in style.



The Target Arc™ System lets you visualize your shot and control ball spin before you swing. We left figuring out the wind and terrain up to you. Don't worry, it's only the PGA TOUR.



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*The bad news is:
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TPC at Sawgrass. TPC at Summerlin. TPC at River Highlands. Reproduced from the actual blueprints. So if there's water on the 17th on the real course, you'll see it in the game. Not that you'll want to.

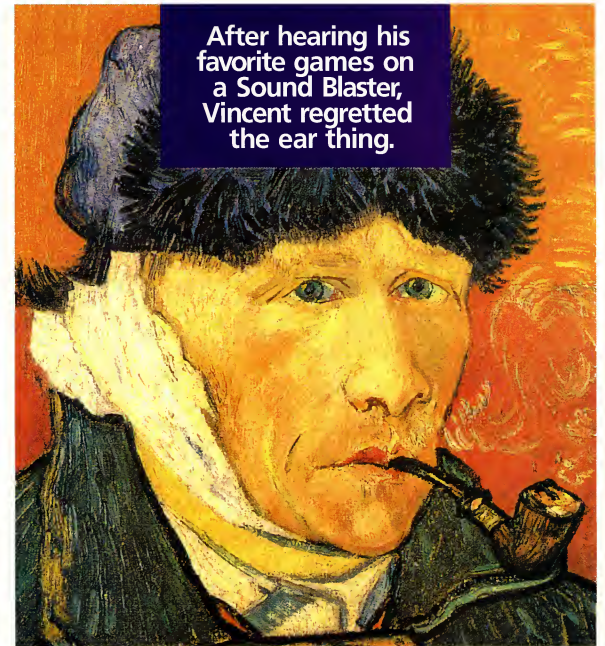


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the ear thing.



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